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THE HŪṆAS IN INDIA

By

Upendra Thakur

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THE HŪṆAS IN INDIA

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To

The Eternal Memory of
Those Brave Sons of India
Who Sacrificed Their Precious
Lives for the Sake of the
Motherland.

FOREWORD

Dr. Thakur kindly asked me to write a foreword for his latest work entitled *The Hūṇas in India.* The subject is extremely interesting since, like most other foreigners merged in the Indian population, the Hūṇas must have created a great impression on the social and political life of the country. Unfortunately the evidence regarding Hūṇa activities is rather meagre.

The Indian names Hūṇa and Hārahūṇa or Hārahūra, supposed to be associated with the Chinese name Hiungnu and 'the White Hun' of the European writers, are mentioned in a few late passages of the *Mahābhārata* and in the geographical sections of the early Purāṇas, both groups of references being roughly assignable to the 4th century A. D. The mention of the Hūṇa people in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa* as settled in the Vaṁkṣu (Oxus) valley has to be assigned to the close of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century. The peculiar Hūṇa practice of scarifying the cheeks of widows, referred to by Kālidāsa, has been recently traced in a Candra inscription of the 10th century. Among references to the Hūṇas in the post-Kālidāsa literary works, the most interesting are the passages in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* describing Prabhākaravardhana (c. 580-605 A. D.) of Thanesar as 'the lion to the deer that were the Hūṇas' and his eldest son Rājyavardhana as fighting with the Hūṇa archers in Uttarāpatha (the tract beyond the Eastern Punjab) near the Himalayas.

There are some epigraphical records of the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries, which offer interesting light on the Hūṇas in India. The Junagarh inscripiton (455-57 A. D.) of the Gupta emperor Skandagupta speaks of his anxiety in selecting an efficient governor for Surāṣṭra (Kathiawar or South Kathiawar) and the Bhitari pillar inscription of his struggle with the Hūṇas.

Thus Skandagupta may have repulsed a Hūṇa invasion of the western part of the Gupta empire. A Mandasor inscription (c. 532 A. D.) of the Aulikara king Yaśodharman of West Malwa refers to Hūṇa rule in the said region before his days and to the still earlier Gupta occupation of the area. In west Malwa therefore the Imperial Guptas were ousted by the Hūṇas who were themselves subdued by Yaśodharman. The same inscription further says how the Śaiva king Mihirakula was defeated by Yaśodharman so that the former's rule came to be confined to the Himalayan region.

This Mihirakula has been identified with king Mo-hi-lo-ku-lo mentioned by the 7th century Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang as having ruled over the Indians 'a few centuries previously' from his capital at Sākala (modern Sialkot). We are told that the said king was a persecutor of the Buddhists and invaded the kingdom of the Buddhist monarch Bālāditya of Magadha and that he was defeated and imprisoned by the Magadhan king, but was set free on the petition of Bālāditya's mother. This Bālāditya of Magadha is often identified with the Gupta emperor Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya who was a brother of Budhagupta (477-95 A. D.). Mo-hi-lo-ku-lo's younger brother is stated, in the meantime, to have occupied the throne of Sākala, and, as a result, the dispossessed monarch took shelter at the Kashmir court though he soon succeeded in killing the Kashmir king and occupying the latter's throne.

King Mihirakula = Mo-hi-lo-ku-lo is regarded by most historians as identical with the white Hun king Gollas mentioned as the lord of India by Cosmas Indiacopleustes in 547 A. D., while our attention is also drawn to the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim-envoy Song-yun who paid a visit to the Hun emperor's capital in Afghanistan in 519 A. D. and paid his respects to the Hun king of Gandhāra in 520 A. D. Scholars have regarded this Hun king of Gandhāra to be none else than Mihirakula.

The Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula represents him as the son of Toramāṇa and suggests that East Malwa formed a part of his dominions at least for about the first 15 years of his reign. The Eran inscription of the 1st regnal year of his father Toramāṇa suggests that East Malwa was conquered by the Hūṇas sometime earlier, though the date of the conquest must be later than 484 A. D. when the Eran inscription of Budhagupta was incised. Toramāṇa's rule and the early years of Mihirakula's reign have to be assigned to the period between 484 and c. 532 A. D. The inclusion of the Punjab in the dominions of Toramāṇa is indicated by an inscription from the Salt Range.

The names of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula are found in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* lists of the ancient kings of Kashmir, though they are not described as father and son in the Kashmir tradition. A large number of coins bearing the names of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula. have been discovered, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* specially mentioning the coins struck by Toramāṇa.

Some scholars have found it difficult to identify the Magadhan king Bālāditya, who defeated Mihirakula according to Hieun-tsang, with Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya, because the former is said to have been a Buddhist while the latter's seals describe him as a Vaiṣṇava. It may, however, be noted that Harṣavardhana Śilāditya was a Śaiva according to his epigraphical records though Hiuen-tsang describes him as a Buddhist. Hiuen-tsang's statement that Mo-hi-lo-ku-lo flourished a few centuries before his visit to India is likewise dubious.

The elephant force of apparently the Maukhari king Īśānavarman (553 A. D.) of U. P., who was originally a vassal of the Imperial Guptas, is described in the Aphsad inscription as having routed the Hūṇa army. This seems to refer to the help the Maukharis rendered to Bālāditya in the latter's struggle with Mihirakula.

Candragomin's grammar speaks of the defeat of the Hūṇas by the Jarta or Japta in illustrating an event which occurred during the author's lifetime and must have been well known to his readers. Some scholars believe that the reference is here to the defeat of the Hūṇas by the Jarta or Jats of the Punjab. Candragomin, however, wrote in Bengal and it is doubtful that the Jat victory over the Hūṇas in the Punjab created any impression on the minds of the people of distant Bengal. On the other hand, Bengal formed a part of the Gupta empire and the Gupta victory over the Hūṇas may have been remembered as a great event because the chiefs of Bengal, like the Maukharis, probably fought for the Gupta monarch. That is why some scholars regard *Japta* and *Jarta* to be copyist's errors for *Gupta*. If Skandagupta's claim in the Bhitari pillar inscription merely refers to his success against a Hūṇa invasion of the western districts of his empire, Candragomin's reference may really be to Bālāditya's struggle with Mihirakula nearer home in Magadha wherein the Hūṇa king was probably kept imprisoned at Pāṭaliputra.

That the Hūṇas were a patent force in the social and political life of the Punjab-Rajasthan-Malwa-Gujarat region during the early medieval period seems to be clear from their mention in a large number of epigraphical and literary records. The Pāla king Devapāla (c. 810–54 A. D.) of Bengal and Bihar claimed to have humbled the Hūṇas while a Hūṇa contingent obviously adorned the Pāla army for centuries. A copper-plate grant (899 A. D.) from Una near Junagarh in Kathiawar speaks of the Cālukya chief Balavarman, a vassal of the Gurjara-Pratihāras of Kanauj, as having killed Jajjapa and other kings and 'freed the earth from the Hūṇa race.' The Guhila king Allaṭa of Medapāṭa married Hariyādevī, daughter of the Hūṇa king, according to the Atpur inscription of 977 A. D. An epigraph of the Paramāra king Vākpati II Muñja (973–96 A. D.) of Malwa refers to Hūṇa-maṇḍala as forming a part of his dominions while traditions credit the said monarch as well as his father and predecessor Sīyaka II and his brother and successor Sindhurāja with victory over the Hūṇas. According to Hemacandra, Caulukya Durlabha (acc. 1009–10 A. D.) of Gujarat won Durlabhādevī in a *Svayaṁvara*, but had to fight with the rival claimants including a king of the Hūṇa country. The Khairha plates (1072 A. D.) mention Kalacuri Karṇa's queen Āvalladevī as belonging to the Hūṇa clan. An Ajmer inscription of 1153 A. D. speaks of a Hūṇa royal family.

The above indications of the great prestige enjoyed by the Hūṇas, settled in the western regions of India, during the early medieval period make it intelligible why they were probably counted sometimes in the later age as one of the respectable Rajput clans.

Dr. Thakur deserves our thanks for bringing together in one volume the scattered bits of information about the Hūṇas in India. We are glad to find that he has tried to do justice to the subject, even though it may not be possible, as in most other subjects relating to early Indian history, to expect finality in all the questions raised by him, especially because the evidence at our disposal is meagre and often controversial.

University of Calcutta,
May 30, 1967.

D. C. SIRCAR

PREFACE

The activities of the Hūṇas in India for about a century constitute a fascinating chapter in the chequered history of our land. But, a systematic study of this memorable episode has remained almost ignored by historians, which nodoubt deserved a serious consideration. In the course of my post-graduate lectures in Patna University I felt the necessity of writing a systematic history of the Hūṇas and I began a more careful study of the subject. The following pages embody the result of my six years of investigation and are intended to throw light on the obscure problems connected with the history of the Hūṇas in India. Although the volume can hardly be regarded as an exhaustive study of the subject, nevertheless it presents some connecting threads and assumptions.

The major part of this work was done in Patna while I was working as Lecturer in Patna University. When I joined the Magadh University as Reader, I undertook the work again, and I am glad that the work is now complete inspite of the numerous odds I had to face from time to time.

I am very grateful to my revered teacher, Prof. Dr. D. C. Sircar who has laid me under a deep debt of obligation by contributing a learned Foreword to this volume; to Prof. Radhakrishna Choudhary, G. D. College, Begusarai who gave me valuable suggestions in the preparation of this work; to Prof. Dr. R. S. Sharma, Patna University from whom I received helpful suggestions and to Śrī S. V. Sohoni, I. C. S., Additional Member, Board of Revenue, Bihar, whose knowledge of Hūṇa history and coinage proved a great source of inspiration to me in the course of my investigation. I must express my sense of gratitude to my esteemed friend, Dr. Gosvāmī S. P. N. Puri, M. A., Ph. D., M. P., Mahantha of Budhauli, Gaya, whose generous hospitality enabled me to complete the work within a short time. I must also express my thanks to Śrī Rājeshwar Jhā, Office-incharge, Bihar Research Society, Patna and several other friends for their kind help and assistance in the publication of this work. I am responsible for any error of fact and judgement, and I crave indulgence of the learned scholars for the same.

The University of Magadh,
17. 7. '67

Upendra Thakur

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI : Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
ARASI : Annual Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India.
ASI : Archaeological Survey of India.
ASR : Archaeological Survey Reports.
CII : Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
DKA : Dynasties of the Kali Age (Pargiter).
DKM : Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha (B. P. Sinha).
EHI : Early History of India, 3rd edn. (V. A. Smith).
EHNI : Early History of North India (S. Chattopadhyaya).
EI : Epigraphia Indica.
GOS : Gaekwad Oriental Series.
HCIP : History and Culture of the Indian People, vols. i–v (Ed. Majumdar and Pusalker).
HK : History of Kanauj (R. S. Tripathi).
HM : History of Mithilā (Upendra Thakur).
HMHI : History of Mediaeval Hindu India (C. V. Vaidya).
IA : Indian Antiquary.
IC : Indian Culture.
IHI : Imperial History of India (K. P. Jayaswal).
IHQ : Indian Historical Quarterly.
IMC : Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum (V. A. Smith).
JA : Journal Asiatique.
JAOS : Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JASB : Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
JBBRAS : Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JBORS : Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
JBRS : Journal of the Bihar Research Society.
JDL : Journal of the Department of Letters, Cal. Univ.
JIH : Journal of Indian History.
JNSI : Journal of the Numismatic Society of India.

JRAS : Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

JRASB : Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

JRASBL : Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters.

JUPHS : Journal of the U. P. Historical Society.

Mbh. : Mahābhārata.

MK : Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.

MS : Manuscript.

NHIP : A New History of the Indian People, vol. vi (Ed. Majumdar & Altekar).

Num. Chron. (*NC.*) : Numismatic Chronicle.

PASB : Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

PHAI : Political History of Ancient India, sixth edn. (H. C. Raichaudhuri).

RT : *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa.

RV : *Raghuvaṁśa* of Kālidāsa.

VGA : The Vākāṭaka-Gupta Age (Ed. Majumdar & Altekar).

THE HŪṆAS IN INDIA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE HŪṆAS IN WORLD HISTORY

THE story of the relations between the Indian and Western civilizations in ancient times is indeed the fascinating story of a period of about a thousand years which begins in the first century B. C. with the establishment of the so-called Indo-Scythian dominion and bears as its distinguishing mark the subjection of the extreme north-west of India to tribes which came from the regions of Central Asia. It was in that region that three great civilizations—the classical, the Indian and the Iranian—crossed one another and have left their imperishable impress on the history and culture of ancient world. The Persians, the Śaka-Scythians, the Indo-Greeks, the Parthians, and the Kuṣāṇas came and dominated the political scene of India for about five hundred years and the latter were followed by a more formidable and ferocious race who immediately succeeded them as conquerors in north-western India. They are popularly known as the Hūṇas, or the White Huns or Ephthalites whose part in Indian history commenced from about the middle of the fifth century A. D. and continued for about a hundred years.

The great upsurge of the Hūṇas literally knocked the two great continents of Asia and Europe out of their bottom and paralysed the peaceful and cultured life of the millions of the people for a pretty long time. Like meteors they brilliantly shot up into the sky for a while and soon vanished into nothingness. But, inspite of their short duration in the subcontinent of India, they constituted the terror of the world[1] and lived with glory during more than two thousand years.[1] Their history in fact is the history of a nation almost ignored which established powerful monarchies in Asia, Europe and Africa at different times. The Hūṇas, later on christened as Turks, gradually made themselves masters of the whole of the great Tatary. From 200 B. C. several royal families of of the Hūṇas successively reigned and they possessed empires more extensive than that of Rome, with illustrious emperors, legislators and conquerors. Moreover, they are credited with having contributed to the destruction of the Roman empire, ravaged France, Italy, Germany and all the countries north of Europe ; ruined the empire of the great Khalifs and possessed the Holy Land.[2] The area from the western Europe in the west to China in the east once formed their empire whose marks can yet be seen in the modern names of places like *Hungary* (Chinese *Heungnoo* or *Huingnu*) and *Hunza* (meaning the place of the Hūṇas, also known as *Kanjud*, formerly a State on the upper Indus forming a part of Gilgit) in Asia. And, it was during their second period of terror in Europe that their name came to be associated with Attila.

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[1] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. ii, p. 342 (1745).

Born believers in blood and iron, the Hūṇas swooped down upon the smiling plains of Asia and Europe and carried deaths and devastations with them. They ascended and came like a storm, like a cloud to cover the different lands, riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army. Their violent outburst resembled something like volcanic eruption in the history of the human race and like a veritable strain of lava they issued forth from their homeland and "spread over Europe and Asia. Homeless and lawless they rode their horses awake and asleep. Their fierce yells spread terror wherever they were heard and they engaged all the civilized peoples of the world in fearful cataclysmic war."[3]

We possess fairly detailed information as to the part which the Ye-tha (as described by the Chinese annalists) or Ephthalites played in the West during the course of the wars which they incessantly waged against the Persian empire from the reign of the Sessanian Bahrām Gūr (A.-D. 420–438). Since they represented natural allies of the Greek empire in the latter's struggle against the Sessanians, they prominently figure in the acounts of the Byzantine historians who know them by the name of the White Huns. Procopius, who also employs this designation in the middle of the sixth century, distinctly reckons them as the race of the Hūṇas who figured in Europe although they stood in no direct connection with the latter, and dwelt at a great distance from them on the northern frontiers of Persia.[1] He further praises them as having reached a far higher stage of civilization than the Hūṇas of Attila and ascribes their epithet of 'White' to the lighter hue of their skin which, though not beyond controversy, is quite interesting as we have shown elsewhere in this dissertation.

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[1] M. Deguignes, *Histoire Generale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols et des autres Tatares Occidentaux & etc*, pref. V ; J. J. Modi, "The Early History of the Huns" in *JBBRAS*, xxiv (1917) p. 540.

[2] Deguignes, *op. cit.* pref. xxv.

[3] *HCIP*, Vol. iii, Intro. xv.

Dashing and vigorous as a race, nomadic in character, possessing no walled cities nor even fixed residences and moving about from place to place in order to secure fresh pasturage for their herds, the Hūṇas, the earliest of the historically known inhabitants of Mongolia, had, inspite of great vicissitudes in their fortunes, atlast carved out a vast principality for themselves by virtue of their sheer war-talent and ruthless strides in the third century B. C. This Hunnish empire is generally known as the first Turanian empire of which we have any historical record.[2] To the east (eastern part of Mongolia and the western part of Manchuria), west (region of Turkistan) and immediately to its east (Chinese Turkistan), Kashgaria and in the eastern and north-eastern part of Kashgaria, *i.e.*, the region adjoining the Hunnish dominions in Mongolia were a number of tribes, still nomadic in character (better known as horse-nomads) "with a steppe culture similar in all essential respects to that of their Turanian neighbours, the Huns."[1] Of these the most prominent were the Wusun, the Yueji and the Kirghis who, though generally believed to be Indo-European in origin, are included with the Turanians as the process of their 'Turanization' had begun by the time the Hunnish empire reached its height.[2]

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[1] A. Stein, "White Huns and Kindred Tribes in the history of the Indian North-West Frontier" in *IA.* xxxiv, p. 80.

[2] W. M. McGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, p. 109.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE CHINESE EMPIRE

A formidable race of warriors, the Hūṇas loved war and violence as it were to satisfy their constant urge for dashing movement and speedy expansion of their territory at the cost of their neighbours. They had as such to fight many ferocious battles against the peoples to the east, and to the west of themselves. But their most arduous and historic campaigns were directed against the Chinese in the south. The great Jeng (the grand-son of Jao-Siang, the founder of the house of Tsin in China) was the first emperor of the Tsin dynasty (B. C. 246—B. C. 210) who is credited with having founded China's military and political greatness. It was he who directed most of his military campaigns against the Hūṇas pushing them back into the Gobi desert with the result that Southern Mongolia came within the sphere of the Chinese influence. It was also during his reign that orders were issued for the construction of that wonder of wonders—the Great Wall of China (214 B. C.) with a view to securing his empire from the invasion of the Hūṇas and similar war-like tribes inhabiting Mongolia and the adjoining tracts. The ferocious struggle between the Hūṇas and the great Jeng is significant as it resulted in the complete rout and expulsion of the former who eventually turned west and drove the Goths before them, causing "premature downfall of the Roman empire." In other words, the construction of the Great Wall of China was; according to some scholars, one of the important contributing factors responsible for the downfall of Rome.

But the lengthy wars between the celebrated Han dynasty of China (B. C. 202—A. D. 220) and the Hunnish empire were even more bloody, bitter and balanced, and it once seemed as if the Hūṇas rather than the Hans were to become masters of eastern Asia. Had this eventuality taken place, no doubt, "the history not only of Asia but of the whole civilized world would have been radically different."[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, p. III. For other details see p. 108 ff.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 112.

The history of the rise and growth of the Hunnish empire can be traced back to the period when the Celestial empire under the vigorous leadership of the Tsin dynasty was fast consolidating its power and rehabilitating its lost prestige. Credit goes to Touman Shānyu for effecting the Hunnish tribal confederation in Inner Mongolia and consequently laying the foundation of the Hunnish empire. But, Touman (B. C. 214) notwithstanding his great qualities as a leader and conqueror, was no match for Shi Huangdi, the founder of the Tsin dynasty who subdued and forced him and his Huṇa hordes to retreat to the north or into Outer Mongolia. It was, however, only five years later, after the death of the Chinese emperor and his great general Meng Tien that the Huṇas could recover from this great set-back and re-conquer practically the whole of Inner Mongolia (209 B. C.) under the able and dynamic leadership of Touman,[2] who welded the Hūṇas into a formidable nation, but his dreams could not be realised. It was thus left to his son Maodun, the great conqueror, to fulfil the mission of his father by transforming this small nation into a vast empire.

Touman met his tragic end at the hands of his brave son, Maodun who not only murdered his father, but also his father's concubine, all his brothers and half-brothers and, above all, all the Hūṇa chieftains who refused to render him implicit obedience, with a vengeance and firm determination as it were, due to his father's betrayal.[3] A great hero and conqueror like Attila, Chingis Khan, Osman or Timur of the Turanian race, Maodun raised this nation out of dust to a great height and during his thirty-five years of rule (B. C. 209-174), the Hūṇas literally reached the zenith of their power[1]. He may, therefore, be classed with great generals and conquerors of world history like Koros, Darius, Hannibal and Alexander. But the great glory and prowess of the new empire built up with the sweat and blood of Maodun could remain intact only for two or three generations after his death, and thereafter started rapidly fading, declining and disintegrating. This accelerating process of disruption could not be arrested by his weak, inefficient and incapable successors who were soon thrown into the dustbin of history.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 115.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 116; E. H. Parkar, *A Thousand years of Tatars*, Sanghai, 1895 ; R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, *Madhya Asia kā Itihāsa* (Hindi), Vol. I, pp. 80–81.

[3] McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 116 ; R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, *op. cit.* pp. 81–82.

Besides being the creator of the Hunnish empire, Maodun was also an inventor of a new kind of weapon, *viz.*, the use of whistling arrows with which he trained his followers to unified action. A brilliant collection of individual fighters, the Hūṇas terribly lacked the community-spirit and concerted action that really make a nation great. This spirit was fostered only by a master-mind with iron will-power that Maodun was. His urge for concerted action was further responsible for the growth of this simple tribal organisation into an elaborate and complicated hierarchy of officials headed by twenty-four nobles, each of whom ruled over atleast ten thousand warriors. It may be said to his credit that the Hunnish empire, so organised with a certain element of feudalism, remained intact during his life-time and many years afterwards.

Thus, the accession of Maodun to power ushered in a new glorious era for the Hūṇas—the era of empire-building, of vigorous military exploits and of splendid achievements all around. The Hūṇas now defeated and conquered the tribes such as the Dingling, the Gienkun or Kirghis, the Yueji and the Wusun (the latter two being the inhabitants of Eastern Kashgaria) and the twenty-six States lying beyond the Yueji. These conquests were significant for they marked the fateful beginning of their epoch-making movement towards Europe.

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[1] According to Parker, Maodun flourished between B. C. 183 56 (*op. cit*, 247). Also see N. A. Vernstam, *Arkh. Oche. Savanoi Kirghis*, (1941), p. 42. According to some scholars, however, Touman flourished in lc. 250 B. C.

But, of all the wars the most exciting was the one between Maodun and Liu-Bang or Gao-di of the Han dynasty of China. It was an arduous warfare in which Gao-di had a providential escape which in turn meant that China retained her independence. Had the Hūṇas overwhelmingly defeated the new Han dynasty they would certainly have invaded and conquered China proper and would have forever remained linked with the Far East.[1] It is true that after three hundred years of incessant fighting, with short intervals in between, the Hūṇas and their Turanian allies were ruthlessly crushed and driven off into the west "with the eventual result that the Huns and their successors were destined to destroy not the Chinese but the Roman empire."[2] But, it was possible only after the death of Maodun Shānyu who remained in undisputed possession of the whole of Mongolia and received regular presents and tributes in the form of silk, wine and choice eatables in addition to "one of the most beautiful ladies" of Gao-di's court. Thus, the Chinese emperor strove hard to keep him in good humour and till the time of Emperor Lü, the relation between the northern and southern empires remained quite friendly.

On his death in 174 B. C. (or 162 B. C.)[3] Maodun was succeeded by his son Giyu who is also known as Lao-Shang, "Old High" or Venerable Shānyu. During his sixteen years of rule (c. 174–160 B. C.) he managed to keep his father's empire intact and "fully matched any of his fathers's military exploits," atleast in some of his campaigns. Like his father he also received regular presents from his Chinese counterpart, Wen-di, which included once again a Chinese noble lady as his bride. The Chinese articles of luxury flowing regularly into the Hūṇa country could not, however, bring about any appreciable change in the rigid ancient manners and customs of the Hūṇas which they so zealously maintained and anxiously preserved.

Moreover, the relation, based chiefly on luxurious presents and appeasement, could not sustain long. The lull before the

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1. McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 122.
2. *Ibid*, p. 122.
3. Parker, *A Thousand years of Tatars*, p. 348.

storm was soon broken and it burst forth into sudden rupture and bad blood between the northern and southern empires. Through ceaseless persuations of a renegade eunuch (a Hūṇa-convert Chinese) Giyu was convinced of the utility of an immediate invasion of China (c. 166 B.C.) and made preparations for the showdown. Giyu marched at the head of a big army, broke through the Great Wall, pushed up within a few miles of Chinese capital and burnt one of the imperial palaces. But, on being affronted by a mighty Chinese army the former adopted their traditional tactics and retreated north of the Great Wall without losing anything in men or booty. This conflict without any positive gains on either side, convinced the rulers of both the countries that they were equally balanced and as such they immediately negotiated a treaty of peace, the terms of which made it mandatory that the territory south of the Great Wall would remain subject to the Chinese empire and the territory north of it to the Hūṇa empire. The Hūṇas were accordingly recognised as the undisputed lord of the regions now known as Manchuria, Zungaria, and Kashgaria, making the Hūṇa territory about four or five times larger than the Chinese empire traditionally noted for its intensive population and vast wealth. The only result of this treaty was that the Chinese and the Hūṇas now remained on friendly terms till the death of Giyu.

Meanwhile the Hūṇas had turned their attention elsewhere. The military campaigns conducted by Giyu are sufficient to suggest that he deserves a permanent place in world history, for it was his attack upon the Yueji that caused the latter to move westward which later changed the whole course of history in India and the Near East. It seems that the Yueji were the hereditary enemies of the Hūṇas who had attacked them atleast thrice during the regime of the first two Shānyus—Touman and Maodun. Though subdued, they were yet far from being crushed. It was left to Giyu to completely rout them, capture and kill their king and finally drive them towards the west. This complete collapse forced a section of the Yueji to flee to the south who were later known as the Little Yueji. But, the bulk of them, dreaded and harassed, fled far to the north-west to the Zungarian basin and finally settled along the banks of the Ili river and in the areas near the shores of Lake Issik-kul after driving out the Śakas who occupied the regions previously. They later came to be known as the Great Yueji.

The expulsion of the Śakas from Zungaria proper was a great historical event fraught with far-reaching consequence. They fled to the further south and it was a section of these fleeing Śakas who founded the kingdom of Gipin in north-western India, while their other branches pushed towards the west and south-west overrunning the Greek domain in Sogdia or Transoxiana.[1]

Harassed and tired of their frantic search for a new safe home the Yueji had to face further troubles as they could not remain there in peace for long. Only a few years later they were attacked by the Wusun. In this bloody battle the Wusun lost their king and received sound thrashing from them and ultimately took refuge with the Hūṇas. This gave Giyu a splendid opportunity to crush the Yueji. The heir to the Wusun throne received all help and patronage from the Hūṇa emperor and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Yueji who in utter confusion and horror, fled still farther to the west (c. 160 B. C.) and overran and occupied Sogdia and Dahia or Bactria which formed a part of the Greek kingdom of Bactria.

We have seen above how Sogdia had been occupied by the Śakas after having been driven by the Yueji who once again swooped down upon the Śakas, their old enemies and forced them to move out. The exit of the Śakas from the scene of Sogdia was responsible for another great political shake-up as they, in their turn, invaded the Parthian Kingdom and settled in the old province of Drangiana, known as Śakastan, the modern province of Sistan.

Thus, the relentless military campaigns of Giyu against the Yueji were directly or indirectly responsible for a sweeping change in the whole ethnic map of Central Asia, for the

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 126–27 ; Sāṅkṛtyāyana, *op. cit.* pp. 85–86.

Yueji and the Śakas were now destined "to play an important part in the history not only of Iran but also of India"[1]—a significant episode well known to the students of ancient history.

Giyu was succeeded by his son Günchen who ruled for thirty years (126 B. C.) and maintained friendly relations with the Chinese empire even in its troubled days. But, during this period the Hūṇas gradually lost their control over the Wusun who defeated the armies of the Hūṇa empire and asserted their independence, marking the end of the age-old control of the Hūṇas. The empire was now beginning to suffer from internal decay and the process of disintegration had already set in, eating into the very fabric of the empire. Nonetheless, the Hūṇas still formed "the largest and most powerful single unit in the Far East or for that matter anywhere in Asia."[2]

With the accession of the Chinese emperor Wu-di (son of Ging-di), the Martial Emperor, to the Dragon throne, a new chapter opened in the history of the age-old struggle between the Chinese and the Hūṇas. A great and powerful ruler in his own rights, Wu-di considerably expanded his dominion abroad and consolidated his power at home and inflicted a crushing and humiliating defeat upon the Hūṇas who were now helplessly driven north of the Gobi desert. After a few viccissitudes in the earlier campaigns the Chinese generals, Wei-Tsing (B. C. 127–124) and later Ho-kü-bing (B. C. 121–119) struck the smashing blow to their traditional enemy which forever destroyed their supremacy in the area. The famous battle of Sandstorm concluded the long series of campaigns directed by Wu-di against his northern enemies breaking their power and prestige and forcing them for many a year to confine their activities to northern or Outer Mongolia.

But, inspite of their heavy losses in men (for we are told that atleast eighty to ninety thousand Hūṇas were captured or massacred by the Chinese) and territories, the power of the Hūṇas, though broken, could not be destroyed and they were still masters of a large kingdom and a great force to reckon with in the Central Asian politics, with their administrative and military organisation intact.[1] This struggle for supremacy between the Hūṇas and the Chinese, in the first phase, continued for about forty years (B. C. 140–101) with many ups and downs in their fortunes and occasional victories and reverses on either side.

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[1] McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 129.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 129 ; R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, *op. cit*, pp. 86–87.

The period between B. C. 100–51 was the period of the slow but sure decline of the Hūṇa empire. In 100 B. C. while Wu-di, the Chinese emperor, was at the height of his glory, the Hūṇa empire continued to suffer from internal decay. The great Shānyus were now succeeded by weaklings who possessed neither the capacity. nor the will to arrest this process of gradual disintegration. In the absence of really strong or powerful personalities the Hūṇa court turned into a hot-bed of intrigues and mutual rivalries and conspiracies. The friendly relation between the two countries could not be maintained long, rather it took a turn for the worse culminating in another long period of sanguinary warfare, which ceased only when the emperor Wu-di passed away from the scene fourteen years later.

In the beginning these campaigns proved very disappointing and, to some extent, disastrous for the Chinese as it heavily told upon their prestige and morale. Another remarkable aspect of this warfare was that most of the fighting took place on the Hūṇa soil, *i.e.*, north of the Great Wall. The Chinese records inform us that several Chinese armies during this period had daringly penetrated hundreds of miles into the Hūṇa territory and captured and killed thousands of the Hūṇas, but these grand military expeditions, successful though they were, could bear no permanent results as the effects of these campaigns were soon negatived by the Hūṇas who also sorrounded and captured several of the Chinese expeditionary armies. Moreover, the Chinese lost two of her brilliant generals—Li Ling and Li Guang-li who were "not only defeated and captured but gave their allegiance to the Shānyu and rose to high office in the Hunnish court."[1]

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[1] For the Chinese sources regarding this piece of information,see McGovern, *op. cit.* pp. 139–42, fn. 9.

Unfortunately for the Hūṇas Li Guang-li fell a tragic victim to the dirty court-intrigues and jealousies and was ultimately put to death which resulted in great decline in their power and prestige. Though Li Guang was gone, his spirit haunted the Shānyus and their empire. Internal dissatisfaction and disturbances were manifest in different parts of the kingdom tantamounting almost to civil war. The situation was all the more aggravated by the bitter contest among the rivals for succession to the throne in 85 B. C., with the result that many of the powerful nobles refused to pay obedience to and co-operate with the new Shānyu who lacked capacity to kill this rebellious tendency. Infact, the Hūṇas were now a house divided against itself which, given a blow, could collapse any moment.

Divided at home and beaten abroad (for the Chinese had inflicted several defeats on the Hūṇas in their campaigns of B. C. 72–71), the Hūṇas met with another overwhelming disaster in the form of an unusually heavy snow-storm which claimed several thousands of them and their horses as its victims. The news of this disaster gave a signal to the fissiparous tendencies to raise their heads in the empire already seething with great discontent and unrest. The Wusun in the west, the Dingling in the north, and the Wuhuan in the east declared themselves independent of the Hūṇa authority renouncing all semblance of vassalage. Not being content with that, they even dispatched troops to raid their master's territory. Taking advantage of the fallen enemy, the Chinese also attacked them and slew and captured several thousands of their tribesmen. But it seems as if the Nature's fury were not yet pacified, for this tragedy was followed by a serious famine which relentlessly wiped out one 'third of the existing population from the face of the Hūṇa country and devoured over one-half of the flocks and herds. As a result, the erstwhile mighty empire now lay prostrate and bleeding. But, this brave nation of warriors and fighters rose quite equal to the occasion; braved the terrific catastrophe with strength and subdued calm and managed to survive wholesale annihilation. Though completely wrecked by internal revolutions breaking throughout the kingdom, external tragedies and the imperial family-feuds for succession to the throne resulting in bloody civil war and consequent division of the empire into northern and southern kingdoms, the resilient Hūṇas at this hour of grave national crisis did not lose courage and came to their own only after sometime. They once again resumed their old pastime of raiding and plundering under the leadership of their new Shānyu, Huhansie (55 B. C.) of the Southern kingdom, who made a ceremonial visit to China to keep his southern neighbours in good humour (51 B. C.) and seek their protection against the attack of Jiji, the Shānyu of Northern kingdom who was no other than his own brother and a formidable rival and enemy. This protection was guaranteed by the Chinese emperor under the terms of a treaty by which Huhansie accepted his vassalage.

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[1] For details see *Ibid*, pp. 156–64.

This new treaty proved to be a great boon to the much harassed southern Hūṇas who, under the Chinese protection and benevolence, made tremendous progress in material affairs and in 43 B. C. managed to migrate along with their emperor Huhansie back to northern Mongolia where they lived in peace and prosperity.

Meanwhile Jiji, the Shānyu of the northern Hūṇas, who first made overtures to China to win over their sympathy to his side but failed, picked up quarrel with the Chinese through his insolent and treacherous behaviour for which he had to pay the price with his life and kingdom. This was a great event in the life of the Hūṇa nation because his death and consequent destruction of his kingdom once again paved the way for the restoration of the nominal unity among the split up Hūṇas. Huhansie was now the acknowledged leader of both the northern and southern tribesmen, under the vassalage of the Chinese until 8 A. D.

During the reign-period of Wang Mang, a powerful Chinese monarch and founder of the Sin (new) dynasty (A. D. 9) the relations between the two countries got strained once again and continued to be so till his death and even after. The internal crisis and conflict following the murder of Wang Mang. presented a golden opportunity to the Hūṇas to effect the re-establishment of their empire (A. D. 19–46) which now grew in strength and territory.

The period between A. D. 46 and A. D. 73 was eventful as the new Hūṇa kingdom shifted its centre over a thousand miles to the west that was later responsible for the Hūṇa invasion of Europe. The Hūṇas under Shānyu Yu (A. D. 18–46) had succeeded in establishing their independence and had emerged after a pretty long period of obscurity as a formidable force in the politics of the Far East. But his death in A. D. 46 once again let loose rebellious tendencies among the Hūṇas and came to such a pass that for the time being it seemed as if they would almost lose their newly-won independence. Internal conflicts accompained with prolonged drought, terrible in nature and devastating in effect, caused havoc with the lives and property of the Hūṇas and exposed their utter weakness and abject sufferings to the outside world. The new Shānyu tried to improve the rotten state of affairs but things became worse and worse and the whole kiṇgdom was soon plunged in a bloody civil war which resulted in the re-division of the empire into northern and southern kingdoms. Of the two, the latter was, to all practical purposes, dependent on the Chinese whereas the former drifted more and more apart and tried to maintain their integrity and freedom to the best of the Huna traditions and were once again on the deadly war-path with the Chinese.

The renewed struggle between the Hūṇas (northern) and the Chinese continued for about fifteen years (A. D. 73–88) and badly damaged the resources and power of the former. They were all the more weakened due to the attacks of the southern Hūṇas. In 91 A. D. the Chinese general Dow Hien's campaigns against them resulted in their utter defeat and they were so demoralised and harassed that they accepted the vassalage of the Chinese with the result that the Outer Mongolia now came under the direct influence of the Celestial empire. The death of Dow Hien, however, emboldened the northern Hūṇas to re-assert their independence (A. D. 93) and they were, as a matter of fact, no longer in direct dependence upon the Celestial empire. But, inspite of this recovery, they were now but shadows of their formerselves and kept confined to Zungaria and to the west of it and practically lost all control over northern Mongolia which was wrested and annexed by their brave and ferocious neighbour, the Simbi tribesmen.

China, on the other hand, suffered a severe set-back after the death of Ban Chao and several of the Kashgarian states broke into open rebellion, asserted their independence and returned to the Hūṇa fold. This was followed by the Tibetans and the southern Hūṇas who acted in collaboration with the Wuhuan tribes of Southern Mongolia but they were soon subdued and crushed and they now ceased to be a menace to the Celestial empire. But, the Chinese campaigns in Kashgaria proved a failure and the northern Hūṇas defeated and killed the Chinese commander and regained control of Kashgarian kingdoms. Infuriated and aghast, the Chinese soon renewed their offensive and in A. D. 123 their general Ban Yung won an overwhelming victory over the combined army of the Hūṇas and southern Güshi and drove them north of the celestial mountains. This spectacular victory once again made China the overlord of all eastern and much of northern Kashgaria.

Trouble, however, began in the newly acquired kingdoms soon after the death of Bang Yung. There were revolts and disturbances in one or the other parts of the Empire which gave the northern Hūṇas a golden chance to fish in the troubled water by exploiting the weakness of the Chinese empire, whom the Chinese generals wooed by diplomacy instead of through force.

Thus, as late as A. D. 153, the northern Hūṇa empire formed a formidable political entity. But soon it showed the signs of decay and destruction. Within a decade the empire was ruined and its members scattered over the vast plains of Turkistan.[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 302.

The southern Hūṇas, too, met a fate no better than that of their northern counterparts. The internal bickerings, discontent and rivalries soon destroyed them. The destruction was complete when they were attacked and annihilated by the Sienbi tribes under the dashing leadership of Tanshihuai who had overwhelmingly defeated the Chinese armies but his premature death in A. D. 180 fortunately saved the Chinese empire from complete annihilation. His weak and unworthy son and successor could not keep the gigantic empire built up through his father's genius and it soon fell asunder. Though brief, his victories had one permanent effect on world history : it destroyed forever the Hūṇa empire as an organised unit. The Sienbi tribesmen remained, for decades, masters of Outer Mongolia, the old home-land of the Hūṇas. The Hūṇa State in Zungaria was now fatally broken up and their tribesmen were forced to move still further to the west in small but disorganised groups. "Though the descendents of the Hūṇas continued to play a role in history for several centuries thereafter the Hunnish empire as a separate political unit disappeared once and for all."[1]

THE HŪṆA INROADS IN EUROPE

After the break-up of the vast Hūṇa empire, the later Hūṇas, though scattered, continued to exist as separate units for several decades. The history of these later Hūṇas is quite interesting and eventful as they accomplished many of the tasks that their mighty ancestors could not, inspite of their incessant struggles and ceaseless efforts. They tremendously succeeded where their great warrior fore-fathers had miserably failed. The poor, weak survivors of the southern and northern Hūṇa kingdoms were destined to change and reshape the course of the history of the world which had a far-reaching consequence in later years. The stormy petrel of the southern kingdom managed "to take the capital of the Chinese empire by storm and no less than two of the Celestial emperors were captured and later killed."[2] They set up themselves as Chinese emperors and their rule was acknowledged for nearly half a century by a large majority of the native Chinese—an achievement which their fore-fathers would have certainly envied and looked with astonishment and horror.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 308.

[2] *Ibid*, chap. xiv.

Their scattered northern counterparts who had migrated to the west in search of a new home did not lag behind in this race for glory and fame. They gradually extended their authority and influence throughout Turkistan which had probably extended as far as the Volga that marked the frontier between Asia and Europe. The mightiest of the Hūṇa emperors in their hey-day had dared not cross this point in their early campaigns but their weakest survivors now broke through the line of the Volga and swept over large portions of northern and eastern Europe, reducing most of the Slavs and Germans to vassalage. Moreover, their heavy pressure upon the Visigoths and Vandals was ultimately responsible for the invasion and quick downfall of the mighty West Roman Empire.

Coming to the Ephthalites or the White Hūṇas we have to remember that their invasion of Iran and other countries in the Middle East profoundly eflected the historic developments in those countries. They had so far exerted indirect influence, but now their domination over the whole southern Turkistan led to the break-up of great monarchies in Persia and India. Their new adventure made them masters of large portions of north-eastern Iran and north-western India.

These three different branches of the Hūṇas proceeding in three different directions have been characterised as the eastern, the western and the southern groups. Of these, the eastern group, *i.e.* the descendants of the inhabitants of the old Southern Hūṇa kingdom, played its most notable part in China for several decades, made themselves masters of practically the whole of China, and established inside it various Hūṇa dynasties. In 460 A. D., however, the last of the Hūṇa monarchs of this group met his tragic death at the hands of the wild Avars who swept down from the plains of Mongolia, only seven years after the death of the great Attila, and effected the dismemberment of his empire.

The western group comprised the descendants of the inhabitants of the old northern Hūṇa empire who migrated westward and eventually invaded Europe and spread over its vast plain. The defeat of the northern Hūṇas in A. D. 89–91 by the Sienbi tribe forced them to re-establish their kingdom in Zungaria and north-eastern Turkistan where they remained from A. D. 91 to A. D. 170, though much against their will. But, even this last affiliation with the East was broken when they were attacked by Tanshihuai, the great Sienbi conqueror who wrested Zungaria from them and forced the majority of the Hūṇas to move further westward. Many of them, however, accepted Sienbi's supremacy and remained in their ancestral lands and several centuries later, after the break-up and fall of the Sienbi empire, re-emerged as separate groups under new names—such as Gaogu tribe, the ancestors of the later Asena and Uigur Turks and Yueban (as known to the Chinese).

But the main section of the Hūṇas who had moved into north-western Turkistan were the bravest and strongest of the northern Hūṇa tribes, for they preferred to seek a new home somewhere in the west to hated submission to, and domination of, the Chinese or the Sienbi tribe. This search for a new home drove them to such straits and destitution that they were almost lost to history for about two centuries (A. D. 170–370). It is really a tragedy that this dashing and vigorous race of many a brilliant general, conqueror, and legislator, finds a solitary mention, during this long period, as an ordinary army-contingent of Tigranes, king of Armenia (c. A. D. 290). About half a century later (c. A. D. 356) they, however, re-emerge upon the pages of recorded history as the Chionites who invaded the northern portion of Persia. These Chionites are generally believed to have been a group of northern Hūṇas. But for these two minor references, history has unfortunately nothing to record to their credit during this period.

The later part of the fourth century A. D. is remarkable as it witnessed the re-appearance of the isolated and scattered Hūṇas in the pages of world-history with thunder and storm.

The annals of the Roman and Chinese empires which were so long silent about their activities suddenly resume the lost thread and speak of their tremendous achievement which was nothing short of the complete destruction of the Kingdom of Alani by A. D. 374 when the ferocious Hūṇas first appeared on the banks of the Don and began "their passage in to Europe"[1] to write a fresh chapter in their forgotten history with blood and sword. It was in the wake of this assuring victory that they entered the territory of the East Gothic kingdom ruled over by the great Hermanrik (the founder of the East Gothic supremacy in south-eastern Europe) in 374 A.D. after crossing the Don river under the leadership of Balamber. After a long warfare the East Goths submitted to the Hūṇa domination and soon the .West Goths also met the some fate. As a consequence, a large number of Goths settled down as refugees in the eastern portion of the Roman empire and became a constant source of trouble to its rulers who, inspite of their best efforts, could not expel them. Their continuous hostile attitude, often resulting in open rebellions, cost the empire heavily and gave staggering blow to its already tottering edifice.

After the Gothic kingdoms it was now the turn of the Roman empire to feel the full weight of the Hūṇa invasions. Prior to 400 A. D., the Hūṇas were comfortably confined to their new homes in southern Russia, *i.e.*, the former home of the Alani tribe and the East Goths. From this base they made occasional raids in to the Roman empire but they were mainly confined to the Asiatic rather than the European side. Bands of the Hūṇas now moved southward and crossing the Caucasus mountains "poured in to various adjacent regions in to the Near East."[2] They attacked and pillaged various parts of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and even Syria. Besides the Roman empire, they also attacked the Sesanid empire in 396 A. D. but were later severely beaten and put to flight by the great Sesanid monarch Behram IV which we have discussed elsewhere in the following pages.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 366.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 373.

The expulsion of the Goths and the Alanis enabled the Hūṇas to make themselves virtual masters and sole inhabitants of the steppe-lands of southern Russia of which they remained masters for a very long time since the later part of the fourth century A. D. It is after 400 A. D. that we have mention of a new leader of the Hūṇas, named Uldes or Uldin. We are completely in dark about the family or the group to which he belonged and are unable to determine his relation, if any, with Balamber, the leader who was responsible for the violent upsurge of the Hūṇas on the European soil for the first time.

The new leader soon proved to be a forceful personality and became the acknowledged leader of the Hūṇa tribesmen in Europe and "the ruler of all the barbarians beyond the Danube."[1] A proud and vainglorious person, Uldin did an irreparable damage to the outlying provinces of the East Roman empire but soon met with a disaster at the hands of the Romans and died. His death thus marked the second phase of Hūṇa conquests and for many years we hear nothing of their activities inside or outside their domain.

The following period, however, witnessed the most brilliant exploits of the Hūṇas in Europe under a new dynasty, usually called the dynasty of Attila, although the real founders and the first rulers of the line were Attila's two uncles, Oktar and Rua who were more or less shadowy figures compared to their great successor. In c. 434 A. D., on the dearh of Rua, the Hūṇa crown was shared in joint rulership by his two nephews, Bleda and Attila. Of the two the former was just a shallow figure while the latter actually dominated the scene in all matters. During their joint rulership the Hūṇas had humbled Theodosius, the East Roman emperor, so much so that he had shamelessly agreed to all humiliating and outrageous Hūṇa terms in order to avoid the renewal of hostilities.

The centre of the Hūṇa kingdom had by this time shifted to the middle Danube basin corresponding to the Austro-Hungarian domain of the nineteenth century. Moreover, their rule had also extended far to the east. The Hūṇas inhabiting the steppes of southern Russia had also acknowledged his command and by 447 A. D. all the tribes of the region were subdued and compelled to accept their suzerainty.

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[1] Quoted, *Ibid*, p. 382.

The death of Bleda, the co-ruler, in 445 A. D. was yet another remarkable event in the history of the Hūṇas as it paved the way for the undisputed authority of Attila who now strengthened the Hūṇa dominion by unifying it under one umbrella. Short of stature, haughty in his walk, an ardent lover of war and yet unrestrained in action, mighty in council and gracious to suppliants and extremely simple in private life, Attila is one of the wonderful personalities in the history of Europe of this period. A terror to this part of the world, he literally carried hell wherever he went. Two years after his accession (447 A. D.) he conducted the most formidable of all his expeditions against the Eastern Roman empire destroying more than seventy towns and fortresses and forcing Theodosius to sign a most humiliating treaty (449 A.D.) bleeding the whole region white. As he expected no more practical gains from this region by arduous and long military campaigns, he shifted his bloody activities from the eastern to the western divisions of the Roman empire with which he had been friendly till 450 A. D.

This friendly relation soon came to an end with Attila's demand of Honoria's (the emperor Valentinian's sister's) marriage with him with one-half of the West Roman empire as dowry. The emperor turned down both his requests which meant an open warfare. Attila invaded the West Roman empire with a huge army and succeeded in taking town after town, plundered and looted immense wealth, and atlast met the Roman general Aetius in the battle of Orleans. The battle was long drawn-out and one of the bloodiest, for it claimed over a hundred and fifty thousand persons as its poor victims in only one day with no decisive result whatever.

In the following year (452 A. D.) he again embarked upon a new campaign and invaded Italy, sacked it and his soldiers spread far and wide over northern Italy capturing and plundering Padua, Verona and Milan. Following this the Romans negotiated peace with him conceding to his terms and demands. Soon after, Attila passed away and was buried with all ceremonies.

The death of Attila, "the scourge of God" and "the fear of the world" was a great event in the history of Europe, because the gigantic Hūṇa empire built up through his genius, collapsed like a house of cards and his tribesmen were permanently expelled from western Europe only a few years after Attila himself had disappeared from the scene. His death further gave rise to bitter internal dissensions among the Hūṇas who fell out with one another to carve out independent principalities for themselves. The Germanic peoples led by Gepids and Ostrogoths took advantage of this situation and revolted against the Hūṇa domination. In a fierce battle (454 A. D.) many thousand Hūṇas including Attila's eldest son, Ellak were beaten, captured and killed. The Hūṇas could never recover from this fatal blow and soon made their permanent exit from the European political scene.

In 461 A. D., Dengesik, Attila's another son, made a bold attempt to re-establish Hūṇa supremacy in the west, but it was too late now and he was decisively defeated and crushed by the East Roman empire.

Meanwhile, the rise of a new Turanian empire in Mongolia founded by the Avars contributed singularly to the fall of the Hūṇas. It is true, the Bulgarian Kutrigurs, following in the footsteps of the Hūṇas of Uldin and Attila, made several attempts to invade Hungary but the Goths and their Germanic brethren were this time able to repulse them under the leadership of Theodorik, the king of the Ostrogoths. Just at this time a new invasion swept in from the east from the Central Asian plains. The Avars who had occupied Mongolia and the adjoining regions were chased out of their home by still another new Turanian empire, *i.e.*, the empire of the Turks. A group of the Central Asiatics—the Warkhuns, avoided subjection to this new Turkish yoke and fled westward. They crossed the Volga and invaded the steppes of southern Russia. They were also known as Avars in their new home as they formed a section of the old Avars. They wiped out the last vestige of the Hūṇa domination in Europe and with their coming "the old traditional Hunnish kingdoms in Europe came to an end."[1]

THE HŪṆAS AND THE PERSIANS

The southern group was composed of the Hūṇas who are better known as the Ephthalites or White Hūṇas,[2] a people in some way or other allied with the Hūṇas who had conquered most of Kashgaria and Turkistan and made important inroads in to Persia and India. The chaotic political condition of the regions and their internal stagnation and decay and dissensions dangerously told upon the morale of the people and caused irrepairable split resulting in the establishment of a number of kingdoms and principalities of which none was of any great significance. The history of the Yueji or Kuṣāṇas during the period is equally obscure. The Kuṣāṇa dynasty after the death of Vāsudeva has nothing worthy of note to its credit though its rulers were still in possession of Bactria, Afghanistan and north-western India.

The great Kuṣāṇa empire seems to have broken up into a number of small principalities and kingdoms shortly after this. But, rulership in these states yet continued to rest in the hands of the kings of Kuṣāṇa origin. In India, these Kuṣāṇa states covered much of the Punjab, and the region to its north-west known as Gāndhāra. Another group of these Kuṣāṇas retained control over the Kābul Valley and most of the sorrounding regions in Afghanistan. Yet another group continued to reside in Bactria after having formed important monarchy.

It is against this background that an account of the relation of the Hūṇas with the Sesanid dynasty of Persia is significant from the point of view of the history of India. The Hūṇa invasion of India, as we shall see later, had some connection with the relation and war of the Hūṇas with the Sesanid empire. These wars, also known as Hætalite-Sesanian wars, lasted for about a century as in India.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 398 ; Modi, *op. cit.* pp. 348–61.

[2] For details, see *infra*, chap. II.

The famous Sesanid dynasty was established in c. A. D. 226 in the province of Persia or Pars in the south-western portion of the Iranian plateau. The land had its own historical charms as it was in this region that the old Achæmenid empire of Cyrus and Darius had arisen, and again it was in this region that the old national tradition had best been preserved during the long period of Parthian rule over Iran. In a very short time, Ardashir, the founder of this new dynasty, succeeded in completely overthrowing the last of the Parthian rulers and in bringing the whole of the Parthian dominion under his vigorous leadership. This Sesanid empire included a major portion of south-western Turkistan which led to their direct contact, both political and cultural, with peoples of Central Asia. Probably they also exercised some sort of vague supremacy over the Kuṣāṇa kings of Bactria. It is important to note that the advent of the Sesanids completely rooted out the last traces of Greek culture in the region and henceforward the people of Central Asia were exposed to cultural stimuli, purely Iranian in orgin.

It has been shown that during A. D. 150–400 various groups of the Hūṇa tribesmen had occupied northern Turkistan, and it was some of these Hūṇas who made long raids to the south and did considerable damage to the northern outposts of the Sesanid empire. These raids were sporadic in nature in the beginning but half a century later their constant inroads constituted a grave menance to the very independence and existence of southern Turkistan, Persia and India.

The Chionites, one of the many groups, are now no longer heard, and an entirely new group emerges instead, commonly known as the Ephthalites or Hephthalites, associated with the Persian invasion. To the Chinese they are known as the *Yetha,* to the classical writers as the *Ephthalites* or the White Hūṇas and to the Persians as *Haytal.* All these names are probably derived from *Ye-tai-li-to* meaning the 'chief.'[1] They are also known as *Euthalites, Haitalites, Nephthalites, Atelites, Abtelites* and *Cidarites*. Further, they are generally spoken of as Turks by the Oriental writers. They were also called *Te-le* or *Til-le* and as they lived on the waters (*āb*), *ie,* the bank of the Oxus, they were called *Ab-tele*. *Euthalites* and *Nephthalites* are probably the corruptions of *Abtelites*. According to Tabari, the name *Haitalite* comes from *Haital* which, in the Bokharian language, means *a strong man*.[1] But, these newcomers, though of a similar stock, were, however, entirely distinct from the Yue-chi whom they drove out. They crossed the Oxus about 425 A. D. and the news of their invasion, as record the Persian chroniclers, caused wide-spread panic among the Sesanians.

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[1] Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 433.

There is a good deal of controvery among the historians about the Hūṇa invasion of Persia. We have various conflicting versions and contradictory accounts of these wars as offered by the eastern writers like Firdausī, Masoudi, Tabari and Abulfeda as well as the Byzantine annalists. For instance, there are conflicting versions about the wars between the Hūṇas and the Sesanid monarch Kobad with whom the former are said to have had long warfare though details are lacking.[2] In all, the Haetalite-Sesanian wars lasted for about one hundred years and proved terribly damaging to the interests of the great Persian empire.[3]

What was the route followed by the Ephthalites on their march to the south-west is not exactly known, but it is certain that they first brought Kashgaria to submission and next moved on to the west and conquered Sogdia. Then they marched to the south and invaded the Yueji kingdom of Bactria. The Yueji monarch, Kidāra, along with his chosen followers, fled to the south and "eventually made their way to the Gāndhāra region in north-western India which had long been inhabited by another branch of the Yueji people"[4] where he soon managed to carve out a new kingdom for himself in north-west India by dispossessing some of his distant cousins who were already ruling over the region. A few years later. his son marched still further to the south-west and created a new dominion with its capital at Puruṣapura, the modern Peshawar.

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[1] J. J. Modi, "The Early History of the Huns" in *JBBRAS*, Vol. xxiv, 1917, p. 565.

[2] M. Deguignes, *Histoire des Huns*, i, p. 332.

[3] Modi, *op. cit.*, p. 564.

[4] McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

The Ephthalites, however, permanently settled in Bactria and established their capital in the district of Bodhaghis, just to the north of the modern city of Herat. This occupation was completed by A. D. 425, and it was after their occupation of Kashgaria, Sogdia and Bactria that they marched still further to the south-west and invaded the Sesanid empire, causing commotion all over the western world which subsequently proved to be of much importance to world-history.

It was during the reign of the great Persian monarch Bahram V or Bahram Gur (or Wild Ass) that the Ephthalites first appeared upon the Persian frontier (420–438 A. D.) and caused consternation throughout the empire. They had earlier been repulsed by Shāpur of Persia (350 A. D.) but that was more in the nature of a raid than a consolidated attack with a purpose.[1] A perfect type of adventurous prince and a happy-go-lucky-life, Bahram nearly lost his senses on hearing of the invasion. He, however, soon managed to collect all the forces of the empire, and in a surprise night-attack completely overwhelmed the enemy, slew the Khan (the Hūṇa chief) and many of his men and captured his chief wife with immense booty. He followed up the enemy across the Oxus, defeated them again and compelled them to sue for peace. Thus, the blow dealt by Bahram to the White Hūṇas in A. D. 427 was so stunning that they made no further inroads in to the Persian territory for many years to come and Bahram till his death in A. D. 438 was never again called upon to defend his northern frontier.[2] But, inspite of this crushing defeat, the fact remains that the menace of invasion by these nomads still overshadowed Persia and constituted the principal pre-occupation of its monarchs for several generations.

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[1] *IA*, 1919, p. 66.

[2] Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 433–34. For Bahram's so-called relations with India, see *Ibid*, p. 438 ; McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 410 ; M. Chavannes, *Turcs Occidentaux*, p. 223.

Yazdigird (A. D. 438–457), son of Bahram, fought several wars against the Ephthalites and, for the most part, it was the Persians who took the offensive. He directed his invasion against the Ephthalite kingdom with a view to conquering it. In the beginning he succeeded in marching far into the Ephthalite domain, but later he suffered a terrible defeat and somehow managed to escape with his life and retired to Persia with the remaining troops, humiliated and with all his prestige lost.

The death of Yazdigird was, however, followed by a period of internal disputes and intrigues which badly affected the prestige of the Sesanid empire. The successional dispute between the two surviving sons of the late emperor—Hurmuzd and Firuz—ultimately gave the Ephthalites an upper hand in what was purely domestic affair of the Sesanid kingdom. Firuz (who was elder and, therefore, natural heir) sought the help of the king of the White Hūṇas to oust his younger brother who had, in accordance with the wish of his father, occupied the throne with the help of his courtiers. But, aided by the Ephthalite troops, Firuz managed to defeat and depose his brother in 459 A. D. and was acknowledged as the rightful ruler of the Sesanid empire.

In the beginhing his relations with the Ephthalite were very cordial and he kept them in good humour by paying them handsomely for the services they had rendered. Five years later, however, there arose a dispute between him and the Ephthalite monarch which soon led to armed conflict with short periods of peace between them. But at last he was ignonimously defeated and slain by the Ephthalite monarch, Khush-Nawaz (the high-minded). Thus fell Firuz, known by his country-men as "the brave," after a long reign marked by a series of defeats and failures (484 A. D.).[1] As a result of this humiliating defeat Persia was forced to pay a heavy tribute to the Ephthalites for the next two years. They would have suffered further indignities at the hands of the Ephthalites but for the bravery and military skill of the Sesanid general Sufrai who re-organised the scattered Persian forces and defeated the barbarians when they again attempted to overrun the Sesanid domain. This victory nodoubt saved her independence but Persia now lost all hope of conquering and destroying the Ephthalite kingdom.

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[1] Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 438 ; McGovern, *op. cit.* pp. 412–13.

During the time of Kubad (or Kobad), who ruled intermittently over Persia from A. D. 488 to A. D. 531 the Ephthalite-Persian relations again took a different turn. Like his unfortunate father (Firuz), Kubad was also a disinherited heir to the Persian throne and sought help from the Ephthalites who agreed to assist and aid him in regaining the throne of Persia. Meanwhile, the death of Balash who had ruled during the troubled period (A. D. 484–88) also facilitated his accession to the throne (A. D. 488). But, only a few years after, inspite of his exceedingly good rule, he became unpopular with a large section of his subjects because of his support to certain religious heresies and again took refuge with the Ephthalites who helped him to recapture his throne and kingdom over which he ruled until his death in A. D. 531.

In the beginning the relations between the two kingdoms remained cordial, but the exacting demands made by the Ephthalites upon Kubad soon turned the latter ferociously hostile and drove him into his father's footsteps. Open warfare followed and continued for about ten years (A. D. 503–513), with short intervals, but neither of the two won any decisive victory. At long last they negotiated peace which lasted for about twenty-five years uninterruptedly. Though no details are known, it is nonetheless clear that the formidable Hūṇas from this time onward ceased to be "of primary importance in the policy of Persia,"[1] and in the time of Noshirwan (or Khusrau Anushirvan), the just, they no longer emerge as invaders but as one invaded and crushed by the ever-victorious great king.[2]

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[1] Sykes, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 443.

The accession of Khusrau Noshirwan to the Persian (A. D. 531–579) marked the final phase in the strained relations between the two peoples. Khusrau's victory over the Romans now left him free to deal with his north-eastern neighbours. The political situation in Central Asia took a dramatic turn and in 552 A. D. the Turks rose in armed rebellion against their erstwhile overlords, the Avars, and after completely crushing them made themselves absolute masters of this region. The long strained relations between the Turks and the Ephthalites now developed into open hostilities and after a great battle, the Ephthalites were severely beaten but not yet finally crushed. It was just at this time that the Khagan of the Turks negotiated alliance with Khusrau and sought his help to crush the Ephthalites. In accordance with the terms of the alliance the combined armies of the Turks and the Sesanids attacked the Ephthalites and destroyed their kingdom. Sogdia or the portion of the Ephthalite territory lying north of the Oxus, went to the Turks while Bactria and Afganistan, *i.e.*, the Ephthalite territory south of the Oxus were annexed to the Sesanid empire. Thus, in 565 A. D. the Ephthalites made their final exit from the Persian political scene, and were heard no more, their kingdom having been literally wiped off the map of Central Asia.

THE HŪṆAS IN INDIA

It was in the wake of their invasion of Persia that the Hūṇas first made their appearance on the Indian scene. Harassed and subdued by Kubad, the Persian monarch, the Ephthalites diverted their attention elsewhere and consequently got deeply involved in Indian affairs. From the Chinese chronicles we learn that they commenced their career of conquest and aggrandisement in this region by invading and capturing Gāndhāra in north-western India in about 465 A. D. which was then ruled over by the later Kuṣāṇas who had earlier been expelled from Bactria by the same Ephthalites at the time of the latter's conquest of southern Turkistan. A special officer or princely viceroy, *Tegin* (usually identified with Toramāṇa) was now appointed by the Ephthalite monarch at

Bactria to rule over their Indian dominion.[1] Thus, their constant search for new home and fresh pastures had driven them further east and their prolonged fight with the Persians had naturally brought them in close contact with the Indian borderland which then presented the spectacle of a house divided against itself—too vulnerable to escape the notice of a daring and conquering race like the turbulent Hūṇas, and by the end of the fifth century A. D. they came to be a potential factor to be reckoned with in Indian politics.

It is generally agreed that by the middle of the fifth century A. D. they had founded a powerful empire in the Oxus basin whence they carried their conquests down to Gāndhāra and beyond the Indus in the south.[2] Meanwhile they were also engaged in serious warfare with the Persians. But, it was only after their successful negotiation of peace with Kubad that they fully concentrated on their exploits in India and spread their conquests further, *i.e.*, into the interior of the Indian sub-continent. The daring exploits of the White Hūṇas in India for about a century and their subsequent fall constitute a thrilling chapter in the history of India which had a far-reaching consequence in the following periods.

Thus, the coming of the Hūṇas in India was closely connected with their invasion of Persia and the conquest of the Oxus region. It was a remarkable coincidence that the Ephthalite kingdom in India came to an obscure and ignominious end after the destruction of the parent Ephthalite kingdom in Bactria. For sometime thereafter, we hear of the existence of small Ephthalite groups in Kafiristan in the extreme north-western portion of India but they were eventually absorbed by the sorrounding population—a tragic but fascinating tale of a brave race who came and saw but was ultimately conquered like many other foreign races and finally absorbed in the vast bulk of Hinduism.

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[1] For details, see *Infra*, chap. III.

[2] A. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, chap. III, p. 58 ; *IA*, 1905, p. 73 ff.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN AND EARLY SETTLEMENTS

The origin of the White Hūṇas or the Ephthalites is completely shrouded in obscurity. It is a tragedy that we have no authentic reference to the origin of this great race either in Chinese annals or in Byzantine accounts or in western classical works. Nor does archaeology enlighten us much on this intricate problem. The epigraphic records of the Hūṇas, which have so far come to light in India and other parts of the world, no-doubt give us detailed account of their political exploits but they have almost nothing to say about their origin or geneology.

It is generally believed that the Hūṇas were a Central Asian tribe descended from the great Turko-Mongol people. It is also claimed that they were in no way related to the Hūṇas of Attila : on the other hand, they belonged to the Iranian stock.[1] The claim does not seem justified as the history of Persia has nothing to record about the Hūṇas prior to their prolonged warfare with the Persians. Moreover, the Hūṇas of Attila were certainly one of the many branches of the original Hūṇas who were later split up into various groups advancing in different directions, partly because of their reverses at the hands of the Chinese and partly because of their fatal internecine wars and strifes for leadership that finally culminated in their tragic division as southern and northern groups breaking their unity and solidarity forever. These irreparable losses and reverses apart, the decline in their fortunes at home was ultimately responsible for their rapid march and growth abroad which disturbed the political set-up of many countries of Asia and Europe for centuries.

Though there are no adequate philological data to conclusively determine the ethnological chracteristics of the early Hūṇas, it is commonly believed that they probably belonged to the Turkish branch of the Turanian race.[1] This is further confirmed by the *Avestā* and Pahalavi books of the Pārasīs.[2] It is, however, encouraging to note that when the Greek and Iranian sources fail, the Chinese sources vouchsafe light on the general activities of the Hūṇas and give us some vague idea of their early history and origin. Their relation—close or remote with the Śakas cannot be doubted, though there are no authentic data to conclusively prove it. We have detailed references to the history and activities of the Śakas in the Chinese annals as well as in the recent writings of the Russian historians and archaeologists who have made great advances in Śaka history on the basis of important archaeological discoveries made through their ceaseless efforts and missionary zeal.[3] But, we have not the same with regard to the Hūṇas though the Russian archaeologists have thrown considerable light on their cultural activities in Central Asia.

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[1] R. Ghirsman, *Le Chionites Hephthalites,* chap. V.

The words, *Tatar* and *Turk* have certainly been used for the Hūṇa tribes, but we have no reference to *Tatar* before the second century A. D. and to *Turk* before the fifth century A. D. in the Chinese accounts. The vast Hūṇa tribe was sub-divided into many small groups—*jana* or *upajana*—under their own chiefs. One of their various groups was known as *Ordu* which in India as well as in other countries signified army or soldiers. They were so named as they formed a community of brave fighters and warriors. They convened public meetings thrice in a year where assembled the entire *Ordu* and performed religious and social rites and settled political and other disputes. A king was elected over many chiefs who was called *Shānyu*.

The annals of the Hiang and Wei dynasties furnish us with some interesting details regarding the origin of the Ephthalites or the White Hūṇas. It is said that this tribe, "a section of the great Yue-chi" originally dwelt to the north of the great wall of China and were known as *Hoa* or *Hoa-tun*. They were in subjection to the Juan-Juan, later known as the Avars. An insignificant wandering tribe in the beginning, they, little by little, consolidated their power and consequently emerged as a very powerful nation. They came to style themselves as *Ye-ta-i-li-to* (or in an abbreviated form of the name *Ye-tha*, just as the *Yue-chi* took the name of Kuṣāṇa) after the name of their ruling family. The name *Ephthalites* or *Hephthalites* orginated from the term *Ye-ta-i-li-to* (subsequently applied to them by the Greeks) as well as the Armenian *Haital* and the *Haythal* of the Persian and Arab writers. In course of time these *Ye-tha* pressed forward to the west of Khotan as far as the Oxus and the Murghāb rivers and established a vast empire extending from the modern Chinese Turkistan to the confines of Persia which comprised more than thirty kingdoms, including Ki-pin or the Upper Kabul Valley. The *Ye-tha*, according to Chinese annalists, were a war-hardened and energetic race and their customs bore a close resemblance to those of the *Tou-kine* or *Turks*. Originally tent-dwellers and unacquainted with the art of writing, they were a race of great warriors remarkable for their custom of polyandry.

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[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. xii.

[2] Modi, *op. cit.*, p. 543.

[3] *R.* Sānkṛtyāyana, *op. cit*, p. 79 ff; A. L., Mongait, *Archaeology in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 11 ff, 153 ff, 212 ff. (Pelican Series, London, 1961).

These so-called barbarians living to the north of China were divided, according to the Chinese annals, into three main groups : the *Rung*, the *Di* and the *Hün-yu* or *Hien-yün*. The latter two names are obviously the transliteration of the native name of that group, known to the West as 'Huns' and to the Indians as 'Hūṇas'. The term *Rung* was, however, "one of very general application and was a common designation for a great number of different peoples of widely divergent ethnic character,"[1] of which the *Di* and the *Hien-yün* were very closely inter-related and belonged to the same ethnic group. It was this group which is commonly believed to have been the ancestors of the Hiung-nu, the founders of the first great Hūṇa empire. The history of this people goes back to 2600 B. C., even earlier, according to the Chinese chronicles.

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[1] M. A. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 80. Also see V. de St. Martin, *Le Ephthalites*, Paris, 1849, p. 52 ff ; M. Specht in *Journal Asiatique*, 1883, p. 335 ff.

We have some references in the Chinese chronicles and elsewhere to the racial, linguistic and cultural affinities of these early inhabitants of Mongolia. It is said that roughly about 32,000 years ago, "a sizeable division of Turanians, probably Mins, moved up the Yangtze river and its tributaries to their headwaters in the Koko Nor province of northern Tibet, drove Ugrians northward and settled there."[1] A large section of of these Turanians pushed up southward, reached the lake region of Central Tibet and later became the progenitors of the famous Turkic or Tataric race. But, those who remained behind in their new home in the Koko Nor region were the progenitors of the present numerous Tunguses or northern Mongolians. In Mongolia proper, the Tunguses forced the Ugrians further northward on the one hand and absorbed or drove eastward the remnants of the delichocephalic Min race on the other. It was these commingled Mins and Tunguses who in course of time spread over all Mongolia and finally occupied Manchuria, Korea, and Japan. A section of them again migrated to North America, but those who remained in Mongolia became the progenitors of the Huns or Hūṇas of history as well as of most of the Kalmucks of Mongolia, Siberia and Russia today.[2]

In about 640 B. C. the powerful Mongolian tribe (the Hūṇas) probably lived in the valleys lying in and between the Sayan and Altai mountains, and were gradually emerging upon the foothills of Semipalatinsk. Their westwared advance through the passes of the Altai mountains forever sunderd, the Nordic nations from their kin, the Massagetae and the Sakae.[3] This Mongolian tribe (*i.e.* the Huns) has been referred to by Herodotus[4] as *Arimaspians*, a hardy, vigorous and war-like people who are said to have taken the gold of the Finns. The account of

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[1] Calvin Kephart, *Racos of Mankind : Their Origin and Migration*, London, 1961, p. 100.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 101.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 263.

[4] Herodotus, iv. 13–17, 27.

Herodotus is chiefly based on the facts in the poem, *Arimaspeia*, composed by Aristeas, an eminent Grecian born about 600 B.C. in a noble family of Proconnesus (now Marmora Island), who flourished during the time of king Cyrus of Persia and king Croesus of Lydia. His poem was also known to Pliny and Aulus Gellius. The statements of facts used in this poem agree with similar writings of contemporary authors and later historical data.[1]

We are further told that on the plains of Semipalatinsk the Hūṇas encountered and pressed westward the Turko-Ugrian nations of the Argippei (Balgarians) and Iyrcae (Hungarians) and various other Ugrians, including the Finns. The southwesterly movement of the Hūṇas on the Kirghiz steppe also pressed the Turkic Issedones down upon the Nordic Sakae, in western Turkistan, "impelling them toward the south and the east where they settled in Sogdiana and Ferghana."[2] About the middle of the third century B. C. the pressure of the Hūṇas (Arimaspians) between the Ural and Altai mountains forced the Hungarians (Argeppei) to southerly end of the Ural mountains. Thus, early in the third century B. C. the Hūṇas arose in the east, moved across the Ural mountains and gained possession of the Central Ural River basin, the eastern frontier of Europe, and had gradually spread to the westerly side of the Ural river which caused the Getie allies of the Alani (the later Ossetes) to move to the westerly side of the lower Volga.

It was from this point that the Hūṇas made their further dashing incursions which eventually unsettled the political condition of Europe for a long time. Viewed in this context, it would be seen that the invasion of Europe by the Mongolian Huns (Arimaspians) in the later part of the fourth century A. D. was one of the epochal events of history, which ultimately terminated a thousand years of relative tribal stability between the Ural and Elbe rivers, interrupted by periods of strife along the shores of the Black Sea. About 372 A. D. the Hūṇas deserted their habitation on the Central Ural river for their calamitious invasion of central and western Europe. In other words, they were the first Turanian nation after the Finns, Bolgarians and Hungarians, to cross the European boundary[1]—an episode that has already been discussed in the preceding chapter.

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[1] Calvin Kephart, *op. cit*, pp. 309–10.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 325–26.

As regards the racial, linguistic and cultural affinities of these early inhabitants of Mongolia, it has been usually taken for granted that the early inhabitants of Mongolia were "Mongolian" or Moṇgoloid in appearance. In other words, they were typical representatives of the Yellow Race. Some scholars also suggest that these early inhabitants "ran truer to the pure Mongoloid type than their neighbours, the Chinese; and that the Chinese, especially the Chinese of the north, who are usually considered more Mongoloid in type than the southern Chinese, may well have received some of their more striking physical characteristics,"[2] which was probably by reason of their intermarriage with some of the early hordes of invaders who swept down from the Mongolian plateau.

But the archaeological work done so far to the north of the Mongolian plateau does not justify the above hypothesis. In southern Siberia, inhabited by the Buriat Mongols, typically Mongoloid in appearance, archaeology has brought to light a number of skeletons dating from an early period, which were markedly long-headed in contrast with the modern Mongol skulls, majority of whom are round-headed. In the light of this unimpeachable evidence it is clear that "in the very heart of the Mongolian domain, the characteristically round-headed race of the present day was preceded by a race of a very different type."[3]

As regards the problem of the coloration of this early long-headed race, the evidence of archaeology has been so far thoroughly inadequate. Hunnish barrows of the second century B. C. have been excavated at Ilanovoi Padi (south of Lake Baikal near the Mongolian frontier) which include large square piles of stone, 18 to 20 m. across, formed of blocks of granite almost like cyclopean masonry. At a depth of 6 m. were found log frameworks covered over by a roof and containing plank coffins with burials. There were also the remains of objects in the tombs which had been literally robbed in antiquity. Many of these remains were of Chinese origin : silk-cloth, small lacquered tea-cups, bronze mirrors, objects of white nephrite, large pots of grey colour with narrow necks etc.[1]

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[1] Kephart, *op. cit.*, pp. 492 ff, 509–10, 515.

[2] McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[3] *Ibid*, p, 94.

Of the few settlements of the Hunnish period, so far known, the outlet of the lower Ivolga, 14 km. south-west of Ulan-Ude (near the south-east shore of Lake Baikal) was excavated in 1949-50. It is surrounded by a defensive belt of four banks and four ditches, the inside area measuring 348 by 208 m. Besides this, the remains of several dozen huts excavated into the ground and with channels of stores in the walls for heating were found. Traces of metal-working (slag), weapons, and pottery etc. were also found.[2] Bones of domestic animals, querns and storage pits clearly speak of the wide prevalence of agriculture besides stock-rearing which no doubt was the basis of the Hūṇa economy. Agriculture, as the objects suggest, was probably practised by conquered tribes and also by Chinese captives.[3] The recent researches of Soviet archaeologists have unfolded the history of the economy and life of this early nomadic Hūṇa race whose raids of pillage played a terribly destructive part in the history of the peoples of Asia and Europe. On the basis of these researches it is definitely proved that culturally the early Hūṇas were more retarded than the peoples they conquered so that in the long run they fell under the cultural domination of the latter.[4]

The Chinese annals also record that this early population had "red hair, green eyes, and white faces" and this description is to some extent accurate. This long-headed or blond type inhabited not only Mongolia proper, but also southern

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[1] A. L. Mongait, *op. cit.* p. 176.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 176-

[3] *Ibid*, p. 176.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

Siberia, immediately to the north of Mongolia. Possibly this early type spread to the northern Mongolia and was predominant all over the Mongolian plateau in very early pre-historic times.[1]

In contrast with this type there were certain other tribes in close contact with the Chinese, for instance, the Hien-yün and others who were direct ancestors of the later Hūṇas. It was probably these various barbarian groups who carried out periodic raids upon the Chinese frontier. There is, however, a remarkable difference between the Turk and the Mongol racial types and they should not be confused with one another. True, profound difference between these two tribes cannot definitely be stressed, but on physical considerations the two seem to be different from each other. The features of the Turks do not resemble the extremely flat face of the Mongols and the wavy and oval hair, the full flowing beards and the overall hairy features of the Turks clearly indicate that they are a highly specialised branch of the Alpine race,[2] distinct from the Mongols. While the Turks and the other members of the Alpine race are associated with the "white" races of Europe, the Mongols are affiliated with the "yellow" races of eastern and south-eastern Asia. This obviously poses the question : were the early inhabitants of Mongolia of the Turk type or of the Mongol type ? In one of the Chinese dynastic histories we find that the Hūṇas were easily distinguished from the Chinese because of the former's large, prominent and extremely hairy noses. This strongly supports the view that the Hūṇas constituting the bulk of the early population of Mongolia belonged to the Turki type rather than to the Mongol type. Thus, it may be suggested that these Hūṇas belonged to "white" group of races and they had nothing to do with the great "yellow" group.

But, the White Hūṇas, whose irruption and hundred years of domination may be treated as only an episode in the history of the Indian Frontier, have been treated as different from the Tou-kine (as called by the Chinese authorities) or Turks who are said to have borne a striking resemblance in matters of manners and customs to the Ye-tha or Ephthalites, a distinct branch of the great Yue-chi, by the Chinese annalists. That they never confused the two is further indicated by their clear reference to the Turks who are believed to have destroyed the Central Asian power of the Ephthalites in the middle of the sixth century. Though treated politically as two different tribes by the Chinese, culturally they are said to have been more akin to one another. But, a close examination of all available evidences enables us to conclude that they were the two different offshoots of the same race who traced their descent from the Turanian family of the Turks. In this we have a very useful guide in the name 'Hun' itself as applied to the Ephthalites. The Byzantine historians probably had the European Huns in their mind and they employed the name in a purely generic sense without any real ethnological ground, and Procopius, the first of these historians to use the term *White Hun* lived fully a hundred years after the name of Attila's Huns.[1] Moreover, we have also to explain the regular use of the Sanskrit term *Hūṇa* to designate this people, if not on the ground that the name became familiar there just in consequence of the White Hun inroad.

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[1] It is possible that the Chinese received some of their "Mongoloid" characteristics from the northern barbarians (Vide—H. J. Fleure, *The Races of Mankind*, p. 46; A. H. Keane, *Man : Past and Present*, p. 270 etc.)

[2] Smith, quoted McGovern, *op. cit*, p. 95.

The earliest mention of this name we have in the Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandagupta[2] during whose time (c. 448-66 A. D.) the Hūṇas made their first appearance in India. Yaśodharman also uses the name *Hūṇa* to designate the White Hūṇas in his Mandsor inscription[3] which glorifies his triumph over Mihirakula. And, finally M. Specht in his note on the phonetic pronunciation of the name written as *Hoa* or *Hoa-tun* has convincingly proved that the Chinese sources apply the name *Hun* to the *Ye-tha* or Ephthalites.[4] Thus, we find that there is a uni-

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[1] Stein, *op. cit.* p. 83.

[2] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, vol. i. p. 312 ff.; Fleet, *CII*, vol. iii.

[3] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 393 ff.

[4] M. Specht in *Journal Asiatique*, 1883, p. 335.

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form application of the name *Hūṇa* or *Hun* to the Ephthalites in Greek, Indian and Chinese records alike. It probably shows that the designation was current among the nation itself, which means that the Ephthalites stood in close ethnological connection with the European Huns who also make their appearance in history just at the same time. Hungarian savants like Prof. Arminius Vambery and others have also proved that the European Huns belonged to the Turco-Tartar branch of the so-called Turanian family. In other words, the White Hūṇas or Ephthalites of India also belonged to the same family.[1]

Philology also supports the above conclusion. The study of a few proper names of the White Hūṇas by competent Turkologists shows that these are nothing but Turkish words. Prof. Karabacek, the distinguished Viennese orientalist, suggests that the name Toramāṇa and his dynastic surname *Jaūvla* found in his inscription discovered in the Punjab Salt Range[2] are purely of Turkish origin.[3] The annals of the three Chinese dynasties also assert that the Ye-tha or Ephthalites were a branch of the great Yue-chi race. From this it may naturally be inferred that the great Yue-chi and amongst them the ruling Kuṣāṇa tribe also belonged to the Turko-Tartar peoples and this suitably explains the conditions then obtaining in those frontier regions of India after the disappearance of the Hūṇas.

In this connection we should also bear in mind that the family which was then reigning in the Kabul Valley and Gandhāra also traced their descent from Kaniṣka and the Kuṣāṇa kings of his lineage. All trustworthy authorities, on the other hand, are agreed in ascribing a Turkish nationality to this ruling family. If these historical traditions and records be correct, we then draw the following irresistible conclusions :

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[1] Stein, *op. cit.* p. 84. According to H. C. Roy, it is difficult to assume that "the Hūns and the Hūṇas are the same as the Hiung-nu of the Chinese" who first caused the dislocation of the Yue-chi in the middle of the 2nd century B. C., yet there is no doubt that they belonged to the same stock of warlike nomads. A branch of these settled in Transoxania, and troubled the Sasanids from c. 420 to 557 A. D. (*Dynastic History of Northern India*, vol. i, p. 58.)

[2] *Ibid*, p. 84.

[3] *EI.* ii, p. 238 ff.

(i) During the occupation of this area by the White Hūṇas, a branch of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty maintained the dominion of its predecessors, or else recovered it after that storm had passed away.

(ii) The great Yue-chi nation was itself of Turco–Tatar origin.

(iii) The complete disappearance of the White Hūṇas in this region may probably be accounted for by their absorption into the kindred Yue-chi.

Yuan Chwang, as we know, reached the Upper Kabul valley in 630 A. D. and, on his return journey, again passed through it in c. 643 A. D. He was probably the first foreign witness after the Hūṇa dominion in India. From his narrative we know that Kapiśā (*Kia-pi-she*) or the *Kapissene* of the Greeks, on the headwaters of the Kabul river, and Gandhāra on the Indus were during this time being ruled over by the same monarch. Like Kaniṣka and his successors this king is also said to have held his court in summer amid "the cool mountains of Kabul and at other times in the Peshawar valley."[1] A brave and exteremely war-like this king was a zealous follower of the faith of the Buddha and also ruled over a dozen lesser kingdoms. Although there was a great difference in customs, laws and spoken languages between the people of Kapiśā (*Kia-pi-she*) and *Tu-ho-lo* (Tokhāristān) or Bactria, the writing of both the kingdoms was very much similar.

The difference is important because from the Chinese records we learn that Tokhāristān in the early part of the seventh century was inhabited by tribes of Ye-tha or White Hūṇas. The latter lived under the suzerainty of the Turks and were very much reduced in power. They, however, maintained their original customs—among them polyandry. Thus, Yuan Chwang's observation regarding the difference in customs, laws etc. clearly shows that "already a hundred years after Mihirakula, the traces of the White Hun invasion had vanished south of the Hindukush, atleast, on the surface. That, on the other hand, the form of writing then used in Tokhāristān should have borne so striking a resemblance to that in the Kabul valley, we can well comprehend."[1] The Chinese sources of the sixth century further inform us that the White Hūṇas at that time did not possess any writing. It is, therefore, highly probable that the system of writing with which the remnants of this race, subsequently settled in Tokhāristān, were acquainted, had reached them, just as their Buddhist creed, from the old Kuṣāṇa territory, an early seat of Indian and Iranian culture.[2]

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[1] Stein, *op. cit.* p. 84.

The above evidences tend to suggest that the early Hūṇas were associated with the races of the west rather than with the races of the east. But, on the authority of the Chinese records we know that there was a great deal of inter-marriage, or atleast of inter-breeding going on between the so-called northern barbarians and the inhabitants of northern China which in the course of time contributed much to the racial appearance of the northern Chinese as well as of the Hūṇa tribes in the north. This process of inter-breeding continued and a time came when a greater number of the Hūṇa tribesmen began to show the Mongoloid characteristics. Had the Hūṇas continued to inhabit the Mongolian plateau, it is probable that the Turki type would have been completely swamped by the infiltration of Mongoloid racial characteristics. But their migration to the west took place when the Turki type was still the predominant element in their racial composition. In other words, the complete "Mongolization" of Mongolia did not take place until "sometime after the great bulk of the Huns had removed themselves from direct Chinese influence by settling in Turkistan."[3]

There are numerous references to the Hūṇas, later known as the Turks, who had invaded Rome and the adjoining territories, in the accounts of the two well known Arab writers—Masūdī and Tabari. According to the former, there inhabited in about 932 A. D. four Turkish tribes—the Yadjni, the Bedjgards, the Bedjnāks and the Nowkardehs–all coming from the same stock near the territories of the Khazars and the Alans near the Caucasus in the direction of the west. Some of these tribes led the life of nomads and some led a sedantary life, but each of them was powerful, ruled by a chief and had its country at the distance of several days march from that of another, and they carried their excursions up to the country of the Romans and even up to Spain.[1] Moreover, he derives the origin of the Turks from the same source as the Pahalavi *Bundeheshn*, though with some difference. Accordingly, one Turk was the ancestor of all the Turks.[2] He places the country of the Turks, together with that of the Khazars, Dilemians and the Slavs in the sixth clime between Syria, Asia Minor and Mesopatamia on the one hand and China on the other.[3] One of the tribes of the Turks was known as Khazars who lived on the shores of the Caspian and as such the Caspian sea was also called *Behr-al-khazer*, *i.e.*, the sea of the Khazars.[4] The chief ruler of these Turks was known as Khakān of the Khakāns who formed a big empire and ruled over all smaller kings of the various tribes or divisions.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 85.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 85.

[3] McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 96.

Tabari, another Arab writer, also refers to some of the tribes of the Hūṇas, known as Khazars, in the time of the Roman emperor Eliānus (Julien). Their territories were under the domination of the Romans. It is said, when this emperor invaded Persia, ruled over by Shapur Zulaktāf, the Khazars, together with the Arabs, formed the main bulk of his army. After some desultory fight, Julien was killed by an arrow from the Persian army and was succeeded by Jovianus who soon concluded peace with the enemy.

From the above survey it is clear that about the sixth century

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[1] Masūdī, *tradiut par Barbier de Meynard*, vol. ii, p. 58, et seq. (chap. xvii).

[2] *Ibid*, p. 131.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 263.

[4] *Ibid*, chap. viii; vol. i, p. 182.

A. D., the Hūṇas almost lost their original name of Hiong-nou or Huns. One of their hordes or tribes, who subsequently came to be known as the Turks, became very powerful and gave its name to the entire Hūṇa nation. As a result of this transformation, the Hūṇas came to be known as the Turks among the neighbouring nations. The name, however, underwent further transformation when Chengiz Khan, the powerful chief of the tribe of the Mongols or Moghuls, established a vast empire and gave the name of his tribe to the whole nation. It was then that the whole Tartar nation began to be spoken of as the Mongols or Moghuls. Thus, the Hiong-nou or Huns received different names in different periods during their progress from the time of their origin up to now, and from their original home to different countries. And, the horde or the tribe of the Turks who "gave its name to the Huns, later on was called *Tou-kioue* by the Chinese and *Turks* by the other adjoining nations."[1]

Thus, inspite of copious references to the Ephthalites in the accounts of the different countries it is very difficult to determine their exact origin and ethnic affinities. In the contemporary Greek and Roman accounts as well as in Indian literature, traditions and inscriptions these dreaded people are referred to as "Hun" or "Hūṇa" showing that the term must have been intimately associated with the Ephthalites shortly after they appeared for the first time upon the stage of world history.

The Hūṇa king who attacked Persia and killed Firuz is mentioned as Akhshunvāra by Tabari, Khushnuvāz by Firdausi, Akhshuwāna by Dinawari and Khshunvāz in *Bundeheshn.*[2] Muller suggests that all these names are transliterations of the Sogdian word, *Khshevāna* which means a 'king,'[3] while Ghirsman[4] believes that these are the synonyms of *Khewān* which was used for Chionites. It seems probable that the term *Khewan* or *Khiyon* or *Hioun* or *Hieon* or *Hūṇa* may be a later development of the original word, *Khshewan.*

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[1] J. J. Modi, *op. cit.* p. 558,

[2] Macquart, *Irān Śahr*, p. 60; *Bundeheshn.* ed. Aṅkalesaria, p. 215.

[3] F. W. K. Muller, *Sogdishe Texte*, vol. i, p. 108.

[4] R. Ghirsman, *Le Chionites Hephathalites*, p. 10 and chap. v.

Recently two coins have been discovered in the monastery (*stūpa*) of Hadda which bear the inscription, *Katulpha Hion.*[1] Similarly on a large number of other coins of the rivals or enemies of the Sasanians we come across the term *Hion*, which is nodoubt indentical with *Hyāona* of the *Avestā*, *Khiyon* of the Pahalavi, *Kiyonāyē* of the Syrian, *Hoa* (or *Hoa-tun*) and *Un* of the Chinese and Sanskrit *Hūṇa.* Thus, the *Hūṇas* of Sanskrit works are the same *Khiyon* or Khionites who appeared on the political firmament of Persia in the fourth century A. D. and played such an important role in her history that they later became an object of reverence in the religious life of the Persians.

During this period the Ephthalites or Hephthalites are referred to by various names in the accounts of the different countries. They are described by Sung Yun as *I-ta*, *Ye-ta* or *Ye-ta-i-li-to* which is identical with the Korean *Yopa-tal*, Annamite *ep-dat*, Japanese *Yen-tatz*, Pahalavi *Eftal*, Armenian *Hep-tāl*, Syrian *Ab-del*, *Hēptal* of the *Bundeheshn*, *Hayathel* in the history of Mirkhund, Persian *Hētāl*, Arabic *Haiṭal* and *Hephthalites* of the Byzantine annals.[2] On a large number of coins their kings are referred to as *Hephtal*. One such coin bears the legend: *Heptal shāho Hiono* ("of Hephthal king Khionite") and the other *Hephtal Hiono*. Some of their coins are bilingual but invariably give the name of the kings as *Hephtal*. Besides the legends, the form, standard and style of these coins mostly tally with those of the Persian coins issued by Shapur II and his successors. Similarly we have a large number of coins of Khusru I re-stamped by Hephtal. The numismatic evidences leave no doubt that atleast three kings of the Ephthalites bore the name, Hephtal who had their surname, *Hion*. This makes it absolutely clear that Hephtal was their family name whereas *Hion* symbolised their race. Thus, Hephtal and Hion or Khiyon seem to be one and the same people.[1]

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[1] Cunningham, "Later Indo-Scythians" in *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1894, p. 276, Pl. 7; Ghirsman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, p. 10.

[2] For other details, see Budhaprakasha, *Kālidāsa aura Hūṇa*, p. 41 ff; "Kālidāsa and the Hūṇas" in *JIH*, 1957, p. 91 ff.

From the same sources it is also clear that the Khiyon-Hephthalites were a different people from the Hiengnu. The former were also known as the White Hūṇas or *Spēt-Khyon* or *Śvetahūṇa.* These names were generally used to distinguish them from the ordinary Hūṇas. Thus, the Ephthalites formed a very peculiar group and differed radically from most of the other Hūṇa groups. They are first mentioned by name in Arabo-Persian sources with reference to the accession of Firuz (c. 457 A. D.).[2] In the accounts of the Byzantine writers also, a clear distinction has been made between the ordinary 'Huns' who invaded Europe and the 'Ephthalites' who are specifically referred to as 'White Huns'.

In a letter of Nanai-Vandaka, a Sogdian merchant, written to Nanai-dvar, his colleague in Samarkand, the Hiung-nu, the conquerors of Lo-yang (A. D. 313), are referred to as *Xun*, a name which is indistinguishable from *Hūṇa*, according to Henning.[3] Otto Maenchen-Helfen, however, contradicts this view and draws attention to many "pseudo-Huns", *i.e*, the Phruni, Chonai, Uenni, Hugni etc. of classical writers. He suggests that the word *Hun* in East Germanic names *Hunirix*, *Hunila*, *Hunwulf* etc. has nothing to do with the Huns of Attila and rather stands for the Old Nordic word *hūnu* meaning "a cub of bear or a young man" or the Proto-Germanic adjective *hun* signifying "high.'[4] He further holds that the Hūṇas of the

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[1] Ghirsman, *op. cit*, Intro. p. 12; Buddhaprakasha, *op. cit.* pp. 42-43 and 42 fn. 76 ff; "Kālidāsa and the Hūṇas" in *JIH*, 1957, pp. 113-14.

[2] Tabari in Noldecke's *Geschichte der Perser und Araber Zur zeit der Sasaniden*, p. 115 ff.

[3] W. B. Henning, "The Date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters," *Bulletin of the Oriental and African Studies*, London. 1948, pp. 601-15.

[4] Maenchen-Helfen, "Pseudo-Huns," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 1955, vol. i, pt. ii, pp. 101-106.

Sanskrit works were the Hephthalites.[1] Enoki believes that the Hephthalites were wholly different from the *Hiung-nu.*[2] According to Shafer,[3] however, the ancient pronunciation of Hiung-nu was *Khiong-nu* or *Xu-nu* which no doubt resembles the word *Hūṇa,* and bears affinity to the Tibetan word *Hor*, which in Tibet is used for the Turks. He establishes the analogy on the basis of the district of *Hundes* meaning, according to Tucci, "the country of wool" situated to the east of lake Mānasarovara in Nari Khorsum (*Mṅa-rio bskar gsum*). But, in this case also, the similarity of names is not a guarantee of the identity of the Hūṇas, Hsiung-nu or the peoples bearing such similar names. The Chinese sources clearly mention that these people belonged to the family of Yue-che. The author of the gloss *Thung-kiang-nu* writing under the heading of the year 555 asserts that the Aptal were of the race of Ta-Yue-che.

According to Procopius, a contemporary writer, "the Ephthalites are of the Hunnish race and bear the Hunnish name but they are completely different from the Huns we know. They alone among the Hunnish peoples have white skins and regular features with big eyes. They are not a wandering people and do not move from one place to another like the general Huns, but live under a king and have a constitution of their own to guide administration. Their behaviour towards their neighbours and colleagues is severe and frank and resembles very much the Romans in this respect."[4] This distinction is further confirmed by the Chinese annalists who carefully distinguish between the Huns proper or the *Hiung-nu* and the Ephthalites whom they mention as *Ye-ti-i-li-do* or *Ye-da.* Their real name was *Hua* and they came to be designated as *Ye-ti-i-li-do* because one of the great Hua rulers bore this name.[1] Ma-tuan-lin in his *Encyclopaedia*[2] has given two comments on the origin of the Ephthalites:

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[1] "Huns and the Hsiungnu", *Byzantion,* 1944–45, vol. xvii, pp. 230–31.

[2] E. Enoki, *The Origin of the Hephthalites, East and West,* vol. vi, pt. iii, pp. 231–32.

[3] Robert Shafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India,* pp. 160–63.

[4] Procopius, *De Bello Persico,* 1, 3. (vols. i–ii)

(i) Ye-ta belonged to the Ta-yue-chi stock but according to some they are a branch of Kao-che ; and

(ii) I-tan belonged to the same race as the Ta-yue-chi.

This shows that the Hephthalities were altogether a different people from the *Hiung-nu.*[3] Notwithstanding some confusions and contradictions in the Chinese accounts, the fact remains that their language differed much from those spoken by the Avars and Gaogü in Central and Eastern Mongolia (probably Mongol) and north-eastern Turkistan and north-western Mongolia respectively. This is important, for the Gaogü were the descendants of the Huns and the ancestors of the Uigurs who definitely spoke Turkish. It may, therefore, be safely presumed that the Gaogü and the Huns spoke an earlier form of the same language. In other words, the Ephthalites differed linguistically from most of the Hūṇa groups who occupied northern Turkistan during the period and had begun their invasions of Europe.[4]

We know that both the Yueji and the Turfanese inhabiting Güshi or Turfan, spoke Indo-European languages and the Ephthalites appear to have been related more especially with Tokharian speaking people of Turfan. Generally the Turfanese were blue-eyed and red-headed as the Ephthalites who bore regular features according to Graeco-Roman description. Thus, on consideration of their features, alphabets, language, script and customs they appear to have been more akin to the Indo-European races than to the Turks or the Mongols. But, in the course of centuries, they came to be regarded as a branch of the Turks or the Mongols by the later writers and became renowned as such.

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1. Theophanes, *Chronographia* p. 270 ; McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 405 ; Buddhaprakash, *op. cit.* p. 44 ff.

2. E. Specht, "E'tudes sur l' Asie-Centrale," *JA.*, 1883, pp. 309-40.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Also cf. Buddhaprakash, "Kālidāsa and the Hūṇas," *JIH*, 1957, p. 117 ff.

Thus, we have seen that the difference between the Hūṇas and the Ephthalites is too remarkable to include the latter in the category of the former. But from the available records it is clear that generally the Chinese and other chroniclers have not distinguished these two peoples, howsoever different their racial and linguistic characters may have been. Further, we have no doubt that in the course of centuries there was enough intermingling of blood between the two races and "a great deal of Hunnish blood doubtless flowed in Ephthalite veins." We also find that the Ephthalite language borrowed a large number of words and phrases of Hūṇa origin. In view of these facts, it is natural to suggest that the Ephthalites, notwithstanding their different stock, came to be regarded in the course of centuries as 'Hūṇas' by their neighbours—the result of a process of historical transformation through the ages of which we have many parallels in history.[1]

In Indian sources the Ephthalites have been mentioned off and on by various writers in their works. It has seen shown above how a small branch of the Ephthalites, settled in Zungaria, had advanced towards India and carved out an independent principality on the border-land during the period when the Hindukush and the sources of Oxus formed the northern and north-western boundary of India.[2] Kālidāsa has also fixed the same national frontier of India.[3]

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[1] For recent studies on Hūṇas, Cf. L. N. Goumilev (Leningrad), "Problems of the history of the Hūṇas" in *Vestinik Dreveniya Istori* (No. 4, 1960), p. 120 ff; B. Y. Stavisky, "International contacts of Central Asia in the 5th–8th century A. D." in *Problem Vostokovedeniya* (No. 5, 1960), p. 108 ff ; B. L. Riftin, "From the history of cultural relations between Central Asia and China," in *Ibid*, p. 119 ff.

[2] These Hūṇas are also derived from *Chunnos. Funos, Hunnas and Hunnus* who moved westward from the steppes of Asia in the last quarter of the fourth century A. D. and swooped down upon the plains of India. For an account of Orosius (c. 5th cent. A. D.) see *Journal of the Greater India Society*, 1943; McCrindle, *Ptolemy*, pp. 33–34.

[3] B. S. Upadhyaya, *India in Kālidasa*, pp. 56–57; R. K. Choudhary, "The Hūṇa Invasion of India" in *JBRS, Altekar Mem. Vol.*, p. 114 (1960).

But, the earliest mention of the Hūṇas we have in the epics. In one of the MSS of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Pahlavas and the Hūṇas have been referred to side by side.[1] We have a similar reference to them in the *Mahābhārata* also.[2] The *Sabhā-parva* presents a list of foreign tribes which include the *Hūṇas* and the *Chīnas*. The *Bhīṣma-parva* also refers to the Hūṇas. Besides the *Śveta hūṇa*, we have also mention of the *Hārahūṇa* in the *Mahābhārata.*[3] Commenting on this term Bailey observes that the word *hār* stands for the old Persian word *Karmir* or *Kharmira* which means *red* or *deep colour.*[4] Thus, the Hārahūṇa means 'red Hūṇa'. In another account, the *Karmir Hion* and the *speta Hion* have been mentioned side by side. It is said that the Zoroastrians called their enemies, who also included the Hūṇas, "Karmīra" because their headdress, shield and flag were all of red colour (*sukhra - kulāha ut sukhra jena ut sukhra draphs*).[5] It is, however, surprising to note that we have no mention of the red Hūṇas elsewhere though the White Hūṇas or the *Śvetahūṇas* have been frequently referred to. In fact, the Hūṇas had little or nothing to do with the red colour. The Persian accounts probably confused them with other invading races, who adopted red flag and red shield, with the Hūṇas because of the name of the latter having a guttural aspirated stop in the beginning resembling the Iranian consonant *X* or *Kh* which seemed to recall the words *Karmir-Xarmir* to the ears of

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1. Cf. *St. Petersburg Dictionary*, IV, 40, 25.
2. *Mbh.* (Cal. edn.), I, 6885 (Cf. the Hūṇa); III. 1991; VI. 373.
3. *Ibid.* II. 209; III. 11, 85; II. 32. 12.
4. H. W. Bailey in *Asiatica*, p. 112 ff; *Festchrift Friedrich Weller*, Weisbaden, 1954.

5. Cf. *Bahaman-yastā*, ed. by Ankalesakhiya, 6. 3; Bailey, *op. cit.* In this connection it is imporant to note that we have mention of a tribe known as *Tāmraliptaka* in the *Mahābhārata* (I. 147, 2. 120). They were so named probably due to their red or copperish colour. In the accounts of the Theng dynasty of China, it is stated that the Tibetans had a peculiar custom of colouring their mouth with red colour (Shafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India*, p. 134. Also see O. Pritsak, *Orientierung und Farbsymbolik, Saeculum*, vol. V, 1954)

the Iranians so closely that they established a connection between them. This name was later borrowed by Indian writers from the Persian chroniclers and gradually found its mention in the *Mahābhārata*, and a few other works. Whatever the name, there was no racial difference between the so-called Hārahūṇa and the Hūṇa. They were called 'white' or *śveta* so that they could easily be distinguished from Hueng-nu proper. Infact, the *Hārahūṇa* of the *Mahābhārata* actually stands for the *Śvetahūṇa* or the white Hūṇa or the Hūṇa in general.

Varāhamihira refers to both the Hūṇas and the White Hūṇas (*Śvetahūṇa*)[1] and the *Mahāvastu*[2] also mentions them along with the Chinas. In the *Sabhā-parva*[3] they are included in the list of foreign tribes, while in the *Bhīṣma-parva*[4] they are mentioned in relation to the Persians.

The Purāṇas[5] also preserve their name (Hūṇa) in their list of peoples along with the Yavanas, the Gāndhāras, the Sauvīras, the Madrakas, the Kunindas, the Pāradas etc. The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*[6] refers to the *Hārahūṇa*, besides the *Mahābhārata*. It has been shown above that the *Hārahūṇas* were really the White Hūṇas who inhabited the Herat region. In the *Brahmāṇḍa*[7] and *Vāyu Purāṇas*[8] we have the following reference : "हूणा दर्वाः सहूदकाः, हूणदर्वा बहूदकाः, हूणा दर्वा सुहूड्काः "[9] The

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[1] *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, xi. 61.

[2] I. 135.

[3] II. 51. 23-24 : "…हारहूणांश्च कृष्णान् हैमवतांस्तथा"

[4] 9. 65-66 : "…हूणाः पारसिकै : सह "

[5] *MK*. chaps, 57, 54, vv. 34-59; *Vāyu*, chap. 45, vv. 109-136; *Brahma*, chap. 49, vv. 44-71; *Matsya*, chap. 114, vv. 34-56; *Vāmana*, chap. 13, vv. 36-58; Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, vol. I. pp. 299-300.

[6] *Brahmāṇḍa*, chap. 49, vv. 44-71.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Chap. 45, vv. 109-36. We have the following different versions in the different Purāṇas : पारदा हारहूणकाः (*Brahmāṇḍa*); पारदा हारभूषिकाः (*MK*), परिता हारपूरिकाः (*Vāyu*), पारदा हारमूर्त्तिकाः (*Matsya*), परेता हारमूषिकाः etc.

[9] Here again we have different versions in the different Purāṇas : उणा दार्वाः सक्रुत्रका; ऊर्णा दार्वाः सक्रुत्रकाः (*MK*), हूणा दर्वाः सहूदकाः (*Vāyu*), हूण दर्वाः बहूदकाः (*Brahmāṇḍa*); उर्णा दर्वाः समुद्गकाः (*Matsya*) or

Viṣṇu[1] and *Kūrma Purāṇas*[2] place the Hūṇas along with the Sauvīras and the Saindhavas. Of the different readings, however, the reading *Hārahūṇa* is supported by the *Mahābhārata*. The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*[3] suggests *Hārahūra* which is also supported by the *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*.[4]

The *Pāradas* mentioned in the Purāṇas were the Parthians who lived in the Khorasan region. The *Hārahūṇas* or the *Hārahūras* were either a branch of the White Hūṇas or the White Hūṇas themselves, who subjugated the entire area right from Central Asia to Central India in the fifth century A. D. The *Hārahūras*, according to one writer,[5] were living in the Herat region. The Purāṇas locate them in the eastern country.[6] We are told that when the kingdom of the Āndhras would come to an end, there would be kings belonging to the lineage of their servants: 7 Āndhras and 10 Ābhīra kings, also 7 Gardabhins, 18 Śakas. There would be 8 Yavanas, 14 Tuṣāras, 13 Muruṇḍas and 11 Hūṇas.[7] The *Harṣacarita* places the Hūṇas in the Uttarāpatha apparently somewhere about the wes-

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ऊर्णा दर्वाः समुद्गकाः; ऊर्णा प्लुष्टाः सहूहुकाः (*Vāmana*), हूणा दर्वा सहूहकाः; हूणा दर्वाः सहूहुकाः and हूणा दर्वाः सहूहुकाः (*Vāyu*) etc.

[1] Cf "मा (म) रुका मालवाश्चैव परियात्रनिवासिनः
सौवीराः सैन्धवा हूणाः शाल्वाः शाकलवासिनः"

(*Viṣṇu*, II, chap. 3, vv. 14–17; *Kūrma*, I, chaps. 46–47, vv. 41–44; *Brahma*, 21, 15–17.

We have the following versions : सौवीराः सैन्धवा हूणाः (*Viṣṇu*); सौवीराः सैन्धवा हूणाः, सौवीराः सैन्धवाकूणाः and सौवीराः सैन्धवाकृष्णाः (*Kūrma*); सौवीराः सैन्धवापस्ना : (*Brahma*) etc.

[2] II. 32. 12.

[3] Cf. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, p. 24 fn. 4.

[4] Rajaśekhara, *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, GOS. edn., Baroda.

[5] Motichandra, *Geog. Ec. Stud.*, pp. 66, 27–28, 31–32.

[6] Cf. the following verse ;
"कलूताश्चाहु (बाही ?) काश्चैव ऊर्णा (हूणा ?) दार्वास्तथैव च एते देशा उदीच्यास्तु प्राच्यान् देशान् निबोधत (Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 27 and fn. 2)

[7] Pargiter, *DKA.* p. 72.

tern Punjab and the Dārva were people of Dārvābhisāra which roughly comprised the Punch and Naoshera regions between the Jhelum and the Chenab.[1]

In the account of the fifty-six countries mostly being the holy places lying in and on the borders of India, given in the *Ṣaṭpañcāśaddeśavibhāga* of the *Śaktisaṁgama Tantra*,[2] described from the pilgrim's point of view the Hūṇa country is also mentioned. This list is also found in some other works, mostly Tāntric, and the majority of the localities are the Śaiva and Śākta tīrthas which definitely indicate Tāntric influence. The earliest work containing a list of fifty-six countries seems to be the *Candragarbhasūtra* or *Candrabhavaipulya*[3] which mentions them in connection with the Buddha's manifestations in Jambudvīpa. Similar lists are also found in some other mediaeval Tāntric works, for instance, the *Sammoha Tantra* (composed before 1450 A. D.)[4] which gives two lists of the countries.[5] These lists place the *Hūṇa-deśa* to the south of the Kāmagiri and to the north of *Maru-deśa*, *i.e.*, the Desert, and call it the land of the heroes. This list is further supported by the *Harṣacarita* which, as we have already shown, places the Hūṇa country in

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 27. fn. 2.

[2] *Śaktisaṁgama Tantra*, Bk. III, chap. vii, vv. **43–44** :

कामगिरिं समारभ्य द्वारकान्तं महेश्वरि
श्रीकुन्तलाभिधो देशो हूणं श्रृणु महेश्वरि
कामगिरेर्दक्षभागे मरुदेशात्तथोत्तरे
हूणदेशः समाख्याताः शुरास्तत्र वसन्ति हि"

The work was composed sometime before 1744 A. D. (Vide–Sircar, *op. cit.* pp. 69–70 ; H. P. Sastri's paper in *JBORS*, vol. iv, pp. 14–25.

[3] Translated into Chinese by Narendrayaśas in 566 A. D.

[4] P. K. Gode's paper in *ABORI*. vol. xix, p. 184 ff.

[5] Cf. the following :

"इनो (उ) त्कलाः कुंतलहूनाः (णौ) कोंकणः केकयस्तथा
शूरसेनः कौरवाश्च सिंहलाश्च पुलिंदका (काः) (in the first list)
"मलाटश्चैव पानाटाः पात्राद्यान्धक (?) पुलिन्दकः (काः)
हु (हू) णकौरवगान्धार विदर्भाः सविदेहका (काः) (in the second list)

Quoted Sircar, *op. cit.* p, 71,

the Punjab region, particularly suggesting the same area. Thus, the Hūṇas or the Hārahūṇas of the *Mahābhārata* may be equated with the Himālayan people divided into various groups. *Strīrājya* was known to the *Mahābhārata* which lay between the *Hūṇa* and the Taṅgana, *i.e.*, in the trans-Himālayan countries, also known to Varāhamihira and Kalhaṇa. [1] Besides, in the records of the Pratihāras, the Kalacuris and others we have mention of the Hūṇa royal houses and very often they were regarded, though wrongly, as one of the thirty-six clans of the Rājputs. [2]

Coming to Kālidāsa we find that the Hūṇas prominently figure in the list of the countries subdued and conqured by Raghu in course of his *digvijaya.* [3] Raghu's conquest of all the quarters as described in the *Raghuvaṁśa* by the poet who lived in the fourth century A. D. is obviously modelled on the epic-description of the *digvijaya* of Karṇa, the Pāṇḍava brothers and others, indicating *ekachatratva* (universal sovereignty). Raghu began his conquest in the eastern countries on the eastern sea or the Bay of Bengal. Thence he marched towards the south and conquered the Pāṇḍya king. He then moved towards the west and subdued the Pāraśikas or Persians. From there he advanced towards the north where he conquered the Hūṇas on the Vaṁkṣu [4] or the Oxus and the lord of Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa (modern Assam). The description of Raghu's *digvijaya* in the *Raghuvaṁśa* was imitated by a later *praśastikāra* at the Paramāra court who describes the Paramāra king Lakṣmadeva as having defeated Aṅga and Kaliṅga in the east, Cola and Pāṇḍya as far as the Tāmraparṇī river in the south, and the Turuṣkas on the banks of the Vaṁkṣu in the north, with a difference that the Hūṇas have been substituted here by the Turuṣkas who probably signified the Hūṇas in his time.[1]

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[1] Quoted R. K. Choudhary, *op. cit.* p. 116.

[2] See *Infra*, chap. vii.

[3] *Raghuvaṁśa*, iv, 67–68 :

"विनीताध्वश्रमास्तस्य वंक्षु (सिंधु) तीर विचष्टनैः
दुधुवुर्वाजिनः स्कन्धांल्लग्नकुंकुम–केसरान्
तत्रहूणावरोधानां भर्तृषु व्यक्तविक्रमम्
कपोलपाटलादेशि (कपोलपाटनादेशि) बभूव रघुचेष्टितम्"

[4] We have mention of the Hūṇa script in the *Lalitavistara*, known as *Tokhari* or *Tukhārī*. Several inscriptions in this script have been found in Afghanistan and other places some of which are preserved in the Berlin Museum. This script was widely used in the Vaṁkṣu pradeśa or the Oxus region,

Mallinātha in his Commentary on *Raghuvaṁśa*, canto iv, takes Sindhu instead of Vaṁkṣu which is supported by Bhandarkar (*JRASB*, xiii, pt. i, 1947, pp. 36–37) and Hodivala (*JBBRAS*, 1930, pp. 282–83) but Pathak (*IA*, 1912, p. 266), S. K. Aiyangar (*IA*, 1919, pp. 65–74)

The poet (Kālidāsa) describes the Hūṇas as bearded horsemen dwelling on the banks of the Vaṁkṣu or in the valley of the Oxus who are also said to have occupied Bactria. The Hūṇas on the Oxus were probably slightly out of the range but their dashing adventures caused disturbances in the neighbourhood upsetting the political stability of the regions and its echo must have reverberated within the confines of India which nodoubt tempted the poet to make "his hero venture out a punitive

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and other old commentators (Dinakara, Dharmameru, Vijayagani, Cāritravardhana, Vallabhadeva, Sumativijaya and others) have accepted the reading *Vaṁkṣu.* Kṣīrasvāmī, the commentator on *Amarakośa* (second half of the eleventh century A. D.), has also alluded to the settlement of the Hūṇas, vanquished by Raghu :

वल्हीक देशजंवाह्लीकं यद्रघोरुत्तरदिग्विजये दुधुर्वाजिन । स्कन्धांल्लग्नकुंकुमकेसरान् ।

(Vide—K. G. Oka's edition of the *Kṣīrasvāmī*, p. 110, Comment on "वह्लीक", saffron).

Śyāmalika in his *Pādatāḍitakam* (5th cent. A. D.) refers to the Śakas and the Hūṇas and mentions one Āryaghaṭaka or Ārogyaghaṭaka who, though not a Hūṇa, appeared dressed as one (*aye kasyāyam-a-Huṇo Hūṇa-maṇḍana-māṇoitaḥ Ārogyaghaṭakaḥ Pāṭaliputrakāyaḥ puṣpadāsyāḥ bhavanadvārām-āviṣkaroti*) which suggests that by this time the Hūṇas had become quite familiar with this country. (Cf. *JRAS*, 1946, pp. 46–53). Also see Buddhaprakash, *JIH*, 1957, pp. 91–96.

[1] Cf. the Nāgpur Praśasti of Naravarmadeva (1104-05 A. D.) in *EI.* II, p. 188 :

" खेलोत्खाततुरुष्कदत्तविलसद्गाहावलीवेल्लनक्लाम्यत्कुंकुमके सराधिकस्मृद.वंक्षूपकण्ठस्थले ।
येनावाप्य सरस्वती सविधता साधिक्यवाक्पाटवश्चाद्रुनुत्कट पत्रपञ्जरगतःकीराधिपोऽध्याप्यत ।।"

This inscription also supports the reading *Vaṁkṣu* and not *Sindhu.*

expedition across the close border, and then turn to the south-east, conquer the Kambojas and cross the Himālaya, annexing the land of the Kirātas, the Utsava-saṅketas, and the Kinnaras on his way down accepting tribute from the king of Assam and thus complete and secure the Indian boundary." [1]

But, of these, the poetic description of the conquest and subjugation of the Hūṇas is extremely interesting. The wonderful simile describing the defeat of the brave Hūṇas also reflects their age-old custom, the true significance of which has been missed by most of the commentators who have either adopted wrong version of the original verse or misinterpreted it altogether. The poet says: "The valour of Raghu expressed itself in the red cheeks of the Hūṇa ladies" or "the redness on the cheeks of the Hūṇa queens testified to Raghu's achievements in which his prowess was displayed against their husbands." [2]

Commenting on this verse ("कपोलपाटनादेशि···") Mallinātha observes that the cheeks were made red by beating on account of the sorrow caused by the death of their husbands, which is wrong. Infact, Kālidāsa refers to the Chinese custom of slashing their faces with knives so that blood could be seen flowing with tears, which was also prevalent among the Hūṇas. [3]

The Pārasikas were vanquished by Raghu for they lay on the way and were fighting the Hūṇas lately settled in the Oxus basin. Proceeding northward and after having defeated the Persians Raghu reached the settlement of the Hūṇas in the valley of the Oxus which lay slightly to the north-west of the

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[1] B. S. Upadhyaya, *India in Kālidāsa*, pp. 56—57.

[2] K. B. Pathak, "The Date of Kālidāsa" in *JBBRAS*, vol. xix, p. 35; *Raghuvaṁśa*, iv. 68: "कपोलपाटला (पाटना) देशि बभूव रघुचेष्टितम्···" The correct version is "कपोलपाटनादेशि···" which is found in most of the commentaries (Cf. Buddhaprakash, *op. cit.* pp. 51–52).

[3] For a detailed treatment of this controversial passage, see Buddhaprakash, *op. cit.* pp. 51–54. The literary evidence is further supported by archaeological discoveries, particularly paintings in temples, made by Russian archaeologists in Central Asia in recent times. Also see *JA*, 1869, p. 332.

Himālayas. The Hūṇa country was situated in the Doāb of the modern Wakṣh and Akṣhu, the tributaries of the Oxus. The northern border of Kamboja abutted on that of the Hūṇa country. The country of Nābhāka, mentioned in the Rock Edict XIII of Aśoka, [1] as the city of Nabhikapura in the land of the Uttarakurus, has been located in the Thianshan mountains on the confines of Scythia as the original country of the Hūṇas. [2] Kālidāsa says that the north-west and the northern lands beyond were held by the Pārasikas, the Hūṇas and the Kāmbojas. [3] In other words, in the time of Kālidāsa, the Hūṇas were settled in the Doāb formed by the tributaries of the Oxus to which Kṣīrasvāmī also attests. [4] By this time the Sun cult had also become popular with the Hūṇas. [5] It is further clear from the description of Kālidāsa that although the Hūṇas were well known for their bravery and cruelty, they had not reached the confines of India proper during his time.

This is further confirmed by the history of the Oxus region itself wherein we have no mention of the Hūṇas from about second century B. C. to the third century A. D. Their presence in that region during this period is not supported by any evidence whatsoever. Their mention in the *Raghuvaṁśa* clearly indicates that they made their presence felt in that region and outside by the fourth century A. D. and not before, when the poet is said to have flourished. We have mention of the geographical condition of this region in several ancient classical works which specifically refer to the Śakas, the Tukhārīs (*Yueh-chi*), the Lampakas (who, according to Hemacandra, [6] were a branch of the Śakas after whom the modern Laghamāna region

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1. *CII*, I, xxxix.
2. *IA*, 1869, p. 332.
3. *RV*. IV. 67-69.
4. K. G. Oka's edn. p. 110; *RV*. IV. 67.
5. B. S. Upadhyaya, *op. cit.* p. 302; also Cf. *Vikramorvaśīyanāṭaka*, V. 4.
6. *Abhidhāna-cintāmaṇi* :
   "लम्पकास्तु मुरुण्डाः स्युः"

is named),[1] the Kankos (*Kāng-kin*) and others[2] but have nothing to say about the Hūṇas. In the *Sabhāparva* of the *Mahābhārata* we have a detailed description of Arjuna's conquests in the north-western regions where the Vālhīkas, the Daradas, the Kambojas, the Lohas, the Parama-Kambojas and the Ṛṣikas are said to have fought against him.[3] It further adds that the Śaka-Tukhāras and the Kankas made a present of horses to Yudhiṣṭhira.[4] But nowhere do we have any reference to, or mention of, the Hūṇas in this connection.

All these different tribes had settled in this region in or about the first century B. C. and this makes it abundantly clear that the Hūṇas were almost unknown in this region in the first few centuries of the Christian era. It is probable that they might have had some relation with India from early times just as the Persians had, but unfortunately we have no evidence of it. Moreover, the earliest mention of the Hūṇas in Indian epigraphic records we have in the Bhitarī pillar inscription of Skandagupta (455-67 A. D,), discussed in detail in the following chapter. On the authority of the Chineses sources, therefore, it may be suggested that there was no Ephthalite settlement in India proper in about 500 A. D., though they had by this time already settled down in the Oxus region as a powerful political force whence they often directed their devastating raids on the Indian soil.

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[1] Buddhaprakash, *op. eit.* p. 37.

[2] Cf. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 47, 44 :

"सान्ध्रांस्तुषारान् लम्पकान्पल्हवान्दरदाञ्छकान्
एताञ्जनपदाञ्चक्षुः प्लावयन्ती गतोदधिम्"

Matsya Purāṇa, 121. 45 :

"तुषारान्बर्बरकान्पल्हवान्पारदाञ्छकान्
एताञ्जनपदाञ्चक्षुः प्लावयित्वोदधिं गता"

Also cf. Sircar's paper, "Text of the Purāṇic List of Rivers" in *IHQ*, 1951, p. 233 and *Studies in the Geography af aneient and mediaeval India*, chap. III.

[3] *Mbh*. 2. 27. 22–24 :

"ततः परमविक्रान्तो वाल्हीकान्न्पाकशासनिः
महता परिमर्देन वशेचक्रे दुरासदान्
गृहीत्वा तु वलं सारं फल्गुं (वल्गु) चोत्सृज्य पाण्डवः
दरदान् सह काम्बोजैरजयत्पाकशासनिः
प्रागुत्तरां दिशिं ये च वसन्त्याश्रित्य दस्यवः
निवसन्ति वने ये च तान्सर्वान जयत्प्रभुः
लोहा (लम्पकान्) न्परमकाम्बोजानृषि (इषि or इषी) कानुत्तरानपि
संहितांस्तान महाराज व्यजयत्पाकशासनि : ।

[4] *Ibid*. 2. 47. 26 :

"शकास्तुखाराः (तुषाराः) कंकाश्च रोमशाः श्रृङ्गिणो नरा
महागमान्दूरगमान्गणितानर्बुदं हयान्"

Their empire in 500 A. D. comprised Tokhāristān, Kābulistān and Zabulistān but included no part of India proper. Their advance was restricted by king Firuz of Persia, but on his death in 484 A. D. they moved forward, stormed the regions in the further-east and established their headquarters at Herat. Their movement always carried with it the horrors of death and terrible devastations reflecting their demoniac ruthlessness. They completely destroyed the Kuṣāṇa power in the north-east, overwhelmed the kingdom of Gandhāra, made it their base and finally started on their long-cherished mission of the conquest of India. The story of their struggle and subsequent occupation of a part of India, though transitory in nature, constitutes a very significant chapter in the history of ancient India for, they played no insignificant part in this land, and growing from a very dubious origin in a distant land, they succeeded in establishing a very big empire from Central Asia to the confines of Magadha, if not more.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST PHASE

SKANDAGUPTA AND THE HŪṆAS

The long, chequered bloody wars between the Sasanids and the Ephthalites form a very important chapter in the history of Persia as well as of India. It was an event, an episode with results of far-reaching consequence. The fore-runners of death and devastations, the Ephthalites appeared upon the Persian frontiers for the first time during the reign of Bahram V (420-438 A. D.), the renowned Sasanid monarch known for his great skill as a hunter and immortalised by the great poet Umar Khayyam, and for a while shook the Sasanid empire out of its bottom. Their thunderous march and surging onrush caused great consternation and panic among the frontier people and the Persians who for long had heard of the veritable hell that these barbarian hordes let loose wherever they went and whatever they touched. Their very name spelt doom and caused many a heart jump in utter horror in Europe and Asia. The Celestial Empire had narrowly survived an inglorious end : the great Roman Empire had met with tragic dismemberment and ultimate collapse : the smaller kingdoms like Kashgaria, Sogdia and Bactria had gleefully bowed down to the mighty sword of the invincible conquerors and were finally knocked out of their existence and, now it was the turn of the Persians and the Indians, who soon fell victims to their unbridled passion and fury.

Encouraged by the outward indifference and reluctance of Bahram, the lover of the chase and amorous escapades, the Ephthalites stormed Marv; swooped down upon the smiling Iranian Plateau and swarmed on to Rai, near the modern city of Tehran. They were, for a while, the undisputed master of the situation no doubt, but Bahram, by his cunning diplomacy and treacherous strategy, dealt such a stunning blow to the Ephthalites that the latter were broken to pieces (427 A. D.) and dared not make any further encroachment on the Sasanid frontier for years to come. But the death of Bahram once again encouraged them to invade the Persian soil during the reign of his son and successor, Yazdigird (438–457 A. D.) who was no match for them and was too weak and inefficient to arrest their onrush. Though a firm believer in martial glory and military offensive, Yazdigird lacked in strategic skill and sterling qualities of his great father. He was, no doubt, crowned with singular success in the beginning, but soon suffered such an overwhelming defeat that cost his hard acquired prestige and booty only at one blow (454 A.D.).

This was the first victory of the Ephthalites against the Sasanids, but it was no small success, for it was here that the seeds of their future Indian conquests were sown, and germinated. The strong Persia had kept them at bay and allowed no time to recover from the shattering blow; the weak Persia had, on the contrary, encouraged them to mobilise their beaten and demoralised soldiery and marshal all the resources to swing into action once again. Thus, the menace that the Persia of Bahram had succeeded in effectively checking, was given a new lease of life by the Persia of Yazdigird and Firuz who worried the Ephthalites no more and whose weakness rather became a source of great strength to them for their southern conquests without caring for the helpless and prostrate enemies. It was during this hour of great crisis in the history of Persia that the Ephthalites thundered on the Indian scene with a bang. The stage was now set for a new bloody drama to be enacted. The ominous sound of the wrangling swords reverberated throughout the north-western provinces of the country : the scenes changed variously with odds and vicissitudes for the invaders, but finally Destiny decreed otherwise. A new brilliant star had risen on the north-western political firmament of India and the great Gupta Empire met with fate no better than the great Roman Empire in its last days. The verdict of history was tragically reversed.

The above developments clearly suggest as to why the restless Ephthalites concluded peace with the Persian monarch, Kubad (c. 513 A.D.) which lasted uninterruptedly for about a quarter of a century, and abandoned their military campaigns against the Persians for a long time. They were now so deeply involved in Indian affairs that they had to devote more and more of their time to the conquest of India and the security and defence of their newly-won territories in this sub-continent.

But when we come to consider their campaigns in India we are confronted with the almost complete absence of historical data. We can not, for certain, say when they began their marauding attacks upon the Indian soil. From a passage in the Chinese annals we learn that they embarked upon their career of conquest and aggrandisement in this region by the invasion and conquest of Gandhāra in north-western India, a few years after they had established themselves on the bank of the Oxus (448 A.D.), probably between 454-65 A. D. This conquest in north-western India was, of course, made possible at the expense of the Kuṣāṇas, ruled over either by Kidāra, or one of his successors who had earlier been expelled from Bactria, when the Ephthalites first swept into Southern Turkistan. It is further said that they appointed a special official, a *tegin* (a prince or a viceroy) to rule over their Indian domain, who was subordinate to the supreme Ephthalite ruler, Hephthal II, who lived in Bactria, the headquarters of the Ephthalite kingdom.

But, the first important phase in their military campaigns in India proper, for which we have definite historical data, can be traced back to the period when they, after crossing the Indus, invaded the Gupta empire (455–58 A.D.) during the reign of Skandagupta, the last great Gupta monarch. This invasion, though sporadic in character and transitory in nature, presented however, a very critical hour of national crisis in the Gupta history. Coming as it did in the wake of the fierce Puṣyamitra invasion,[1] it had a dangerously demoralising effect on the morale of the people, the army as well as the much-troubled, struggling emperor who had not yet recovered from the shock caused by the former invasion. The harassed and tired monarch, along with his battered armies, had again to gird up the loins to meet the new threat from a new quarter which apparently seemed to throw off the whole empire in utter confusion and panic and divest it of all the pomp and glory that was Gupta. Thus, torn between the external and internal crises, but conscious of the great glory of his forefathers, proud of his crushing victories over the Puṣyamitras and confident of his valour and prowess, Skandagupta rapidly advanced to meet the threatening situation and rose quite equal to the occasion. The victor of the Puṣyamitras, ultimately dealt a crushing blow to the ferocious Hūṇas who were so thoroughly defeated and demoralised that they dared not invade the Gupta territory for long with the result that for more than a quarter of a century the Empire was immune from their cruel and horrible depredations.

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[1] The reading *Puṣyamitras* of the Bhitarī pillar inscription has been disputed by several scholars in recent times. For a detailed discussion of this problem, see Upendra Thakur, "A Note on the Puṣyamitras of the Bhitarī pillar inscription" in *IHQ.*, 1961.

Unfortunately, we have no details regarding this one of the most momentous and decisive wars against foreigners fought on the Indian soil about sixteen hundred years ago, and we do not know exactly where, how and when this was fought. The contemporary literature is almost silent on this episode and it is the epigraphic records of the period which for the first time lift the veil of mystery sorrounding this struggle of life and death of the nation and its ultimate victory. The Bhitarī stone-pillar inscription of Skandagupta (A.D. 455-67) refers to these severe struggles and victories thereof in a scintillating narrative, [1] elaborating Skandagupta's schemes by which he could rehabilitate the sinking glory and power of the empire, [2] then under great stress and strain due to external troubles. Further, his struggles with the Hūṇas also seem to have been referred to in the Junāgarh rock inscription of Skandagupta (A.D. 455–

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[1] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, vol. I, p. 312 ff :
"हूणैर्य्यस्य समागतस्य समरे दोर्भ्यां धराकंपिता भीमावर्त्तकरस्य शत्रुपु शरा... । विरचितं प्रख्यापितो (दीप्तिदा) न द्योति...नभीपु लक्ष्यत इव श्रोत्रेपु गाङ्गध्वनिः (verse 8)

[2] *Ibid*. cf. the following verses :
"विचलितकुललक्ष्मीस्तम्भनायोद्यतेन, क्षितितल शयनीये येन नीता त्रियामा
समुदित बलकोशान्पुष्यमित्रांश्च जित्वा, क्षितिपचरणपीठे स्थापितो वामपादः
पितरि दिवमुपेते विलुप्तां वंशलक्ष्मीं भुजबलविजितारिर्य्यः प्रतिष्ठाप्य भूयः
जितमिति परितोषान्मातरं सास्रनेत्रां हतरिपुरिव कृष्णो देवकीमभ्युपेतः"

457–58) which mentions his conquest of the *mleccha* countries (*mlecchadeśeṣu*). [1] The term, *mleccha,* though generally used to denote all the foreigners, in this case, however, seems to refer to the Hūṇas. [2] But this identification has been questioned in recent times by many scholars. S. Chattopadhyaya suggests that the "*mlecchas* are not the Hūṇas" and that "some mixed horde possibly invaded the Gupta dominion immediately after Kumāragupta's death and Skandagupta was able to drive them outside the boundaries of his dominion ?" [3] Who were these "mixed horde" is unfortunately left unexplained, and we are not told if they were the *mlecchas* or the *Pārasikas, or* the Hūṇas or some barbarian uitlandars or all combined under one umbrella. Moreover, it cannot possibly be denied that these "mixed horde" also included a fraction or the whole of the Hūṇa invaders. [4] The above suggestion is, therefore, vague and does not carry us far.

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[1] *Ibid*. p. 299ff. cf. the following verse:

"अपि च जितमेव तेन प्रथयन्ति यशांसि अस्य रिपवो (ऽ) पि ।
आमूलभग्नदर्प्पा निर्वचना म्लेच्छ देशेषु

[2] Allan (*Gupta Coins*, p. xlvi), Sircar (*op. cit*. p. 301 fn. 4), R. B. Pandey (*Historical and Literary Inscriptions*, p. 93 fn. 4), Ray Chaudhuri (*PHAI*, p. 570) and others identify the *mlecchas* with the Hūṇas while Chattopadhyaya (*Early History of North India*, p, 180) and a few others (R. K. Choudhary, in *JBRS*. Alt. Mem. Vol. 1959, p. 117 and fn. 25) do not agree with this view. Hoernle (*JRAS*. 1909, p.128), on the other hand, does not at all believe in the authenticity of the Hūṇa invasion during the reign of Skandagupta. We need hardly comment that Hoernle's contention is absolutely uncalled for in view of the unimpeachable nature of the inscriptional evidence regarding the Hūṇa invasion contained in the Bhitarī pillar inscription of the victor himself.

[3] S. Chattopadhyaya, *op. cit*. pp. 180–81.

[4] The *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva (a later work) refers to the *mlecchas*, the Pārasikas and the Hūṇas separately (11. pp. 93-94; Tawney's edn. vol. ix). It is said that Vikramāditya of the *KSS*. was Skandagupta who continued wars against the Hūṇas up to 12 years (cf. Buston, pp. 171-72). This is, however, a late work and gives credence to hearsay, often confusing facts with fiction. In our ancient classical literature

The vague reference to the *mlecchas* in the Junāgarh inscription naturally poses the question : who were these *mlecchas* ? And, finally the answer is given in the Bhitarī inscription wherein they are explicitly mentioned by name, *i.e.*, the Hūṇas. For, Skandagupta is said to have overcome the internal troubles and gallantly fought and crushed the external enemies—the Puṣyamitras and the Hūṇas mentioned by name. The Puṣyamitras can, on no account, be called the *mlecchas* as they were the brave sons of the soil, and thus our only choice falls on the Hūṇas who were, by all means, a horde of cruel and ferocious foreign tribe whose only profession was war and devastation. [1] D. C. Sircar's suggestion that the "*mlecchas*" may indicate the Hūṇas who may have advanced against Central India about the end of Kumāragupta's reign, [2] has been challenged on the basis that "there is no evidence to suggest that the Hūṇas advanced against Central India in the reign of Kumāragupta. Even Kālidāsa refers to Raghu's expedition against the Hūṇas on the northern and northwestern side and not within India. Hence the above generalisation is uncalled for." [3] The above refutation is further sought to be supported by another statement saying that "the *mlecchas* are specifically mentioned seperately in the Bhitarī pillar inscription of Skandagupta. If that is the fact

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the word, *mleccha* has been used, in different places, to denote different tribes and as such the use and interpretation of this term has never been consistent conveying only one sense.

As regards the continuance of this war for twelve years, we have no evidence to support it. The nature of inscriptional and numismatic evidence suggests that the war continued only for some time. It was a temporary phase, not a prolonged affair, and Skandagupta soon emerged from this crisis covered with victory and glory.

[1] It is possible that the Hindi word *khūna* may have derived in course of centuries from the original *Hūṇa* who also symbolised murder and utter ferocity to those people into whose contact they later came with. Moreover, the two words sound quite similar.

[2] Sircar, *op. cit.* 361, fn. 1.

[3] R. K. Choudhary, *op. cit.*, p. 117 fn. 25.

why should we derive the meaning of the word, *mlecchas* as Hūṇa in the Junāgarh inscription ?"[1]

We have suggested above that the word, *mleccha* never carried any fixed meaning so as to denote a particular tribe or caste : on the otherhand, it was generally used to connote foreign tribes, whosoever they be, that came to India either in the shape of invaders or settlers. Its meaning, as such, was so flexible that it was readily applied to any foreign tribe or race : sometimes they are mentioned separately both in literary and epigraphic records, sometimes they are confused with the so-called *mlecchas*, and often they are contemptuously dismissed as *mlecchas* or *yavana* for the sake of convenience and expediency. This being the general trend, the suggestion that "the *mlecchas* may indicate the Hūṇas" cannot be rejected disdainfully and especially so, when the Hūṇas and the *mlecchas* in this case are not mentioned side by side. The statement that the *mlecchas* are "specifically mentioned separately in the Bhitarī pillar inscription of Skandagupta" is absolutely wrong, for the inscription in question has nothing to record about the *mlecchas* : it expressly mentions the names of the two avowed antagonists—the Puṣyamitras (if the reading be correct) "whose power and wealth had suddenly gone up" during the concluding years of his father's reign, and the Hūṇas who were eventually crushed. It is only in the Junāgarh inscription that we have reference to the *mlecchas* (*mlecchadeśeṣu*) in general, and not to the Puṣyamitras or the Hūṇas in particular. The statements contained in the two inscriptions, when read together, tend to suggest that while in the latter the Hūṇas are mentioned by the general term *mleccha*, in the former they are explicitly referred to by their name. The mention of the *mlecchas*, the Pārasikas and the Hūṇas in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*"[2] need not disturb us as it is one of the many examples of poetic imageries of confusions created by ancient writers whenever they happened to describe the foreigners. As it were, the word *mleccha* or Hūṇa or the names of other foreign elements meant little or no difference to them with the result that they were often careless about their proper use or interpretation. Among the contemporary and later writers, Kālidāsa is probably the only exception who has referred to them by names, and not by the vague term, *mleccha.* [1]

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[1] *Ibid*. p. 117.

[2] II. 93-94 (Tawney's edn. vol. ix); Buston, pp. 171-72.

Furthermore, from the description of Kālidāsa it is also clear that the Hūṇas had some sort of relation with India from early times just as they had with the Persians. But just as their relation with Persia during the Sasanid period is more authentic so also their relation with the later Guptas is more trustworthy[2]. We have also to remember a significant point in this connection. The great victory over the Hūṇas by Skandagupta must have been gained in the very beginning of his reign (455–58 A.D.), for, while the Bhitarī inscription is not dated, the Junāgarh inscription is dated 137-38 Gupta years (A.D. 457-58). Thus the latter refers to his memorable victory, so expressly mentioned in the former, both allusively and by name, and the words used ("...verily the victory has been achieved by him, etc...") here in reference to his victories over the *mlecchas* sound very much a repetition of similar words and expression, used in the Bhitarī inscription of c. 458 A.D. This unmistakably suggests that his victory over the Hūṇas must have taken place before this time. [3]

The Junāgarh inscription further refers to his fame being sung in the land of the *mlecchas* as well (*api ca jitameva tena prathayanti...mlecchadeśeṣu*) which certainly means the land of the Hūṇas. Besides, the circumstance that only one coin of Kramāditya, *i.e* , Skandagupta was found in the the Bayana hoard, would also suggest that he had ascended the throne just at the time of its interment due to the panic created by the Hūṇas. [1]

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[1] *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV. 61, 65-71, 73, 76-78. Also cf. Bāṇa, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, 4, 163; *MBH*. 11. 48, 6-7; 11. 58, 8-10; II. 27, 22–24; 11. 47. 26 etc; Sharma, *IC*. III, 379 ff; IV, 262 ff. Bühler is not inclined to accept the view that the Hūṇas actually existed on the frontiers of India during the time of Kālidāsa. His arguments are, however, not convincing (*IA*, 1913, p. 249).

[2] J. J. Modi, "The Early history of the Huns" in *JBBRAS*. 1927, p. 581.

[3] cf. Smith, *The Early History of India* (3rd edn.), p.309.

As regards the advance of the Hūṇas against Central India or Surāṣṭra about the end of Kumāragupta's reign, the picture is not clear. We are not very certain about the political condition obtaining in those areas during this period. There is, however, no doubt that everything was not well with these parts of the Gupta empire in the later years of Kumāragupta, and the inscriptional evidence itself suggests that it was not at all smooth and stable. In fact, Central India and Surāṣṭra seem to have been the vulnerable spots that plagued the body-politic of the empire. It was from here that the flames of rebellion and invasion often blazed forth engulfing the whole country; it was the breeding-ground of many a power that violently clashed with the mighty Guptas and it was the last home of some of the great heroic republican tribes whose tragic death marked the final exit of the republican tradition and constitutionalism from the stage of Indian history by the end of the fifth century A.D. The Puṣyamitras shot up into the sky like a meteor and soon vanished into nothingness. Likewise, the Hūṇas also issued forth like the lava of the erupting volcano, blasted the political horizon and soon receded to obscurity.

In other words, Central India often presented a bloody spectacle of advancing armies and retreating forces. With the death of Candragupta II, the scenes, however, became frequent and things took a terrible turn towards the end of his son's reign, when the Gupta empire "had been made to totter". The trouble had assumed such a magnitude that Skandagupta had to give top priority to the security and defence of these areas to avert future troubles and invasions. The Balaghat plates [2] refer to his protective steps with regard to the general administration of Central India and the Junāgarh inscription says that he "deliberated for days and nights before making up his mind who could be trusted with the important task of guarding the land of Surāṣṭras."[1] Besides these, he also appointed protectors in all the provinces. All these measures definitely show that inspite of his resounding victories over the enemies, he apprehended further trouble in the area in the absence of strong and effective admininistrative machinery to combat any such eventualities. It further demonstrates that the trouble was not new and sudden : it had become chronic which called for a relentless surgeon's knife to cure the ailing limbs of the persisting malady. In such a troubled political condition the possibility of the Hūṇa infiltration in Central India and Surāṣṭra cannot be ruled out, for this was the period (c. 454-55 A.D.) when the Hūṇas had crossed the Indus and advanced beyond. They probably took advantage of the anarchic condition following the invasion of the Puṣyamitras and tried to exploit it to their advantage.

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[1] Altekar, *Bayana hoard*, Intro. xxxiii, fn. 2.

[2] *EI*. IX. 271.

That they had been present on the northern and north-western side of the border, if not within India proper, as a serious menace since the time of Candragupta II, is indirectly confirmed by Raghu's military expedition against them so figuratively described by Kālidāsa, and probably indirectly mentioned in the undated Mehrauli iron-pillar inscription[2] of Candra (Candragupta II) wherein he is said to have crossed the Indus and defeated the Vāhīkas or the people of the Vāhīka country (the Punjab), on the Beas and other rivers, which was later conquered and occupied by the Hūṇas sometime during the reign of Kumāragupta I, and from where they directed their constant attacks against the Gupta territory only after the passing away of Budhagupta (c. 498 A.D.). The absence of reference to the Hūṇas in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta as well as in those of Candragupta II probably points to the settlement of the Hūṇas in Gandhāra and adjoining areas after the reign of the latter at the expense of the later Kuṣāṇa kings referred to in the Allahabad pillar inscription. After the defeat of the Vāhīkas, Candragupta made his position on the north-western frontiers and in the Punjab stronger than ever, which fact has been definitely pointed out by his inscription at Mathurā. His coins, particularly his silver coins, are plentiful all over the eastern Punjab as far as the banks of the Chenab. We have his yet another inscription at Mathurā dated Gupta era 61 (=A.D. 380). [1] All these evidences show that he first strengthened his nort-western dominions from the Jullundhar Doāb to Mathurā, having exterminated the Scythians of the Punjab, the North-western frontiers and Western India. [2] Inspite of this consolidation of power in this region, there is, however, no doubt that Gandhāra and north-western frontiers were lost to the Gupta empire much before the accession of Skandagupta, possibly during the later part of Kumāragupta's reign when the empire faced a series of external and internal crises which facilitated the smooth entry of the Hūṇas into those regions.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 300 ff.

"एवं विनिश्चित्य नृपाधिपेन नैकानहोरात्र-गणान्स्वमत्या
यः संनियुक्तो(ऽ)र्थनया कथंचित् सम्यक्सुराष्ट्रावनि-पालनाय
नियुज्य देवा वरुणं प्रतीच्यां स्वस्था यथा नोन्मनसो बभूवुः
पूर्व्वेत्तरस्यां दिशि पर्णदत्तं नियुज्य राजा धृतिमांस्तथाभूत्"
(verses 12-13)

[2] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 276; "तीर्त्वा सप्त मुखानि येन समरे सिन्धोर्ज्जिता वाह्लिका..."

Fleet (*IA*. XV, p. 361.) derives 'Mihira' from 'Meharauli' and takes the former to be the name of a Hūṇa tribe and further suggests that Candra may have been a brother of Mihirakula. We need hardly comment that this suggestion does not deserve serious notice.

Besides these, there is no doubt that in later years Central India came to be temporarily occupied by the Hūṇas. The Mandaśor inscription of Bandhuvarman (Mālava years 493 and 529, *i.e.*, A.D. 436 and 473) also seems to indicate the presence of the foreigners (the Hūṇas) in Mālwā. The inscription says that "after much time had passed, a part of this building (the Sun-temple) was destroyed by other king," [3] which was re-built in the Mālava era 529 *i.e.* A.D. 473 by the silk-weavers' guild.

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[1] *Ibid*. pp. 270-71.

[2] R. N. Dandekar, *A History of the Guptas*, pp. 81, 82, 94.

[3] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 295, verse 36:

"वहुना समतीतेन कालेनान्यैश्च पार्थिवैः
व्यशीर्य्यतैकदेशो(ऽ)स्य भवनस्य ततो(ऽ)धुना"

It has been suggested that one of its portions had been destroyed by the Hūṇas who overran Mālwā and the adjoining provinces during the reign of Skandagupta's successors, which is further confirmed by the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa.* [1] The passage in the inscription in question may also refer to an attack on Daśapura by hostile kings (long after A.D. 436) and not to the permanent occupation of the kingdom by them, [2] as they were in the succeeding period driven out from those areas. We have noted below that the Hūṇas came through the Bolan Pass and reached Central India via Kāthiāwāḍ which lay on the direct route facilitating their march up to Mālwā. The inscription is clear on this point. The said temple was built up in the year 493 (= A.D. 436) during the reign-period of Kumāragupta I, when Bandhuvarman was governor of the province. It was repaired in A.D. 473, during the time of Kumāragupta II, when the Hūṇas probably after their rout in the course of their first wave of invasion, had retreated to their new settlement in Gandhāra. The reference to the "hostile king" (verse 36) in the inscription makes it clear that they were foreigners, and the Hūṇas were the only foreign element in the then body-politic to be reckoned with, as we have no reference to any other foreign invader or king during this period. [3] This leaves little doubt regarding the presence of the Hūṇas and other tribes in or near about the areas which continued to be plague-spots since long.

Unfortunately, the slender epigraphic evidence does not enlighten us on the exact location and place where the fierce battle between Skandagupta and the Hūṇas occurred, but it is significant to remember that the word *Hūṇa* in Sanskrit signifies a foreigner coming from the north-west and one of the thirty-six clans of Rājputs was wrongly given this name in later times[1]. From Kālidāsa[2] we learn that the Hūṇas had been present on the northern and north-western side of the border as far back as the time of Candragupta II. [3] Further, scholars are generally agreed that the Hūṇas came down to India through the Bolan Pass route near Quetta, and captured Gandhāra (Uttarāpatha of the northern-most region of India) which lay on both sides of the Indus and embraced the Rawalpindi district of the North-west Frontier Province and contained the two great cities of Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvatī. [4]

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[1] Ed. R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana in K. P. Jayaswal's *Imperial History of India.*

[2] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 295 fn. 4. For detailed discussion, see Dasaratha Sharma's paper in *IC.* vol. III. 379-81 and vol. IV, pp. 262-63.

[3] R. N. Dandekar does not accept this view and advances his reasons for the same. He interprets the term "अन्यैः पार्थिवैः" in the Mandaśor inscription differently. Inspite of his different interpretation he, however, agrees that Mālwā was lost, and regained during the time of Kumāragupta II. (*op. cit.* pp. 133-35.)

Thus, we find that the western Punjab was never held or garrisoned by the Gupta armies and the Hūṇas having crossed the Sutlej possibly overran most of the parts of Western India and forced their way up to the borders of Surāṣṭra or Kathiāwāḍ. The battle, therefore, seems to have been fought either on the bank of the Sutlej or in the plains of Western India.[1] This contention also gets indirect support from the Bayana hoard. The last king represented in this hoard is Skandagupta-Kramāditya whose only one gold coin was found. It may rightly be argued that the panic created by the Hūṇa invasion in the whole region was so great that the people in the Bharatpur area considered their life and property quite unsafe and buried their treasures and fled away for safety. Obviously the Bayana hoard is one of the many treasures buried during this period of uncertainty and insecurity which has now come to light. Skandagupta, after the rout of the Hūṇas, chased them while they were on the run and pushed them back as far as the Sutlej which formed the river-boundary between Gandhāra and the Gupta territory. The Hūṇas, however, continued to be in possession of Central and Western Punjab (Gandhāra) from where they continued to trouble the Gupta frontiers after the death of Skandagupta towards the end of the fifth century A.D.

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[1] S. Levi, *Notes Chinoises sur'le Inde*, No. 111 (Hanoi, 1903), p. 25; *EI*. I. p. 225; Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, vol. I, (1920), pp. 131-35.

[2] *Raghuvamśa*, IV. 61 ff.

[3] K. B. Pathak, however, believes that in 448 A. D., in the reign of Kumāragupta I, the establishment of the Hūṇa empire in Oxus basin may be placed. Kālidāsa's reference to the Hūṇas being the invincible conquerors of their age, as being still in the Oxus basin, must have been made between A. D. 448 and 455 (Gupta year 136). Kālidāsa and Skandagupta were thus contemporaries. He has further elaborated his point in his second edition of the *Meghadūta*, pp. x-xii (also see his paper, "New Light on the Gupta era and the date of Mihirakula" in *Bhandarkar Com*. Vol. 1917, pp. 213–14). It is very difficult to agree with Pathak that Kālidāsa and Skandagupta were contemporaries. Scholars have now conclusively shown that Kālidāsa definitely flourished in fourth century A. D., *ie.*, in the time of Candragupta 11.

[4] *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 88, 189-90.

"गंधारविषये सिद्धे तोयः पुर्यौं महात्मनोः
तक्षस्य दिक्षु विख्याता रम्या तक्षशिलापुरी
पुष्करस्यापि वीरस्य विख्याता पुष्करावती"

Also cf. *Mbh*. X11, 207, 43; *Rāmāyaṇa*, V11, 113, 11; 114, 11 ("सिन्धोरुभयतः पार्श्वैः"); K. M. Panikkar, *Geographical factors in Indian history*.

The above discussion makes it clear that Surāṣṭra and Central India lay on this strategic route which had in the past seen the advancing and retreating forces of almost all the foreign invaders. It was these parts of the empire that had to bear the brunt of foreign aggression as these were, as before, dangerously exposed to the marauding activities of the Hūṇas in the fifth century A.D. The complacency on the part of the earlier Gupta monarchs had gradually landed these vulnerable parts of the empire in a terrible mess which virtually cost Skandagupta his throne for a while. The shock was so stunning that notwithstanding his resounding victories over the Hūṇas he felt shaky about his own position and is said to have deliberated for "days and nights" over the appointment of governor of Surāṣṭra in order to ensure efficient and strong administration of the provinces to avoid future troubles, as the enemies were still hovering on the western frontiers which alone were then open to inroads. In fact, the overall situation in the western part of the empire was awfully serious owing to the steadily growing powers of the outlying areas which could any moment threaten the existence of the empire itself.

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[1] Altekar believes, on the basis of the discovery of Bayana hoard, that this battle was fought on the bank of the Yamunā, which is not convincing, On the other hand, on the basis of the same hoard, it can more convincingly be argued that the battle was fought either on the bank of the Sutlej or somewhere in the plains of Western India (*Bayana Hoard*, Intro. xxxiii-xxxiv).

R. D. Banerjee suggested that this battle was fought on the bank of the Oxus. His assumption was evidently based on Kālidāsa's passage in the *Raghuvaṁśa*. We have shown above the hollowness of this theory. The idea was first mooted by him in his novel, *Karuṇā* (in Bengali) and later incorporated in his *The Age of the Imperial Guptas*.

The testimony of the Arab writers also confirms the route followed by the Hūṇas in the course of their invasion of India. The Arab chroniclers identify Zabulistan with modern Afghanistan.[1] Zabulistan, as the name suggests, means "the land of the Zabuls". The Kurā inscription of Toramāṇa calls the latter *Sāhī Jāuvla.*[2] The inscriptional evidence is further supported by the coinage of Toramāṇa himself. On the Horseman and Sessanian types of his silver coins, we have the terms, *Jaubla, Jabubla* and *Jabula.*[3] The Ephthalite coins, however, give the Persianised form of these words as *Zabol.*[4] Recently two short but very important inscriptions of Mihirakula in Hephthalite Greek script were discovered in Uruzgan in Afghanistan and published by Bivar[5]. The epigraphic evidence corroborates the numismatic evidence and clearly establishes that the section of the Hūṇas who later settled down in a new land known as Zabulistan, on their way to India, came to be known after the name of their new home (*i.e., Zabol*). Thus, Zabulistan was an early settlement of the Hūṇas to the south of the

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[1] La-Strange, *The Land of the Eastern Caliphate,*

[2] *EI.* I. p. 239 ff; Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 298 ff.

[3] V. A. Smith, "History and Coinage of the Gupta period" in *JASB*, 1894, p. 185ff; Cunningham, "The Indian Coinage of the Ephthalites" in *Transactions of the Ninth Congress of Orientalists*, 1892, p, 235 ff.

[4] Cunningham, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1894, p. 276-78.

[5] A. D. H. Bivar, *JRAS*, 1954, p. 112 ff.

Hindukush and they must have entered the plains of India through the Bolan pass near Quetta; invaded Central India and Surāṣṭra, the nearest point, and were ultimately defeated and repulsed by Skandagupta—an episode which finds unequivocal mention in the Bhitarī inscription and indirectly in the Junāgarh inscription in the form of the defeat of the *mlecchas*.

While paying tribute to the remarkable heroism displayed by Skandagupta in the face of innumerable odds in defeating the Hūṇas we must not forget to salute the memory of those brave *Jartikas* or *Jartas* or the Jāṭs of Sialkot (Punjab) who inflicted another crushing defeat on the fleeing Hūṇas compelling them to retreat to their bases outside the Indian boundary. It was they who actually completed the work left incomplete by Skandagupta, and saved those regions from their murderous depredations. Unfortunately, we have no reference to this memorable episode except in the *Sūtra-vṛtti* of the famous grammarian, Candragomin from Bengal (c. 600 A.D.). He says: *ajayajjarto Hūṇān* [1] ("Hūṇas who were conquered by the invincible Jartas"). [2] Candragomin probably refers to the Hūṇas as an illustration of the use of the imperfect to express an event which occurred within the life-time of the author. [3] This further shows that the Hūṇas finally retreated to Zabulistan. Yuan Chwang gives a lucid description of the temple of *Suna* or *Kṣuṇa*, the God of the Hūṇas which he happened to visit in Zabulistan, widely supposed to be a revered and sacred place among the people of the neighbouring countries. From the description it is also clear that the temple was of Sūrya or Sun worshipped by the Hūṇas in Zabulistan or Afghanistan.[1]

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[1] *IA*. 1896, p. 105; Buddhaprakāśa, *Kālidāsa aura Hūṇa*, p. 65. For different readings and interpretations see Jayaswal, *IHI*, p. 115; Chattopadhyaya, *op. cit*. pp. 139-40, 139 fn 12 etc.

[2] Hoernle indentified the Jartas with the Jāṭhas and wrongly took it to be a reference to the defeat of the Hūṇas by Yośodharman (*JRAS*. 1909, p. 114). Jayaswal (*JBORS*. XIX, pp. 115-16; *IHI*, p. 115 ff.) took it to be a reference to Samudragupta and relying on the wrong interpretation of this passage as a piece of evidence supported his theory that the Guptas were the Jāṭs [For other views see Chattopadhyaya, *op. cit*. pp. 139-40; Keilhorn (quoted *Ibid*.); *PHAI*, p. 528 n; *GVA*. pp. 120-21.]

[3] S. K. Belvelkar, *Systems of Sanskrit Grammar*, p. 58.

During this time their territory in this region was confined to Ghazani and the areas near about the Āb-e-Istādā lake. In the north, their kingdom extended up to Kabul, to the Sulaiman range in the east, to the Helmund pass in the west and to the mountain ranges in the south known to be the centre of the Afghans. Yuan Chwang says that the territory of Hi-ma-to-lo, the king of Tu-ho-lo (Tokhara) also included Kashmir.[2] Probably their supreme monarch during this period was Hephthal who had conquered Gandhāra and Kashmir.[3] Sung-Yun who had visited Gandhāra in 520 A.D. says that this country was formerly known as Ye-po-lo. It was conquered by the Ye-thas who made Laelih the king of this newly acquired territory. The episode is said to have occurred two generations prior to Sung-Yun's visit to the country[4]. From another account we learn that the name of the king was Che-le, not Laelih. The word *Che-le* is the Chinese transliteration of the words, *T-shawl*, *T-shaul* or *Jaula* (*Jāuvla*), which Toramāṇa has used in his Kurā inscription (*Rājādhirāja Mahārāja Toramāṇa Shāhi-Jāuvla*) as well as on his Horseman and Sessanian types of silver coins. All this establishes beyond doubt that the Ephthalites had founded their new kingdom in Gandhāra and Ghazani, *i.e.*, Jāuvla kingdom, towards the end of the fifth century A.D., which reached the pinnacle of its glory during the reign-period of Toramāṇa (c. 490-515 A.D.) and his son, Mihirakula (c. 515-542 A.D.).[5]

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[1] S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, vol. II, pp. 284-85.

[2] *Ibid*. vol. I, pp. 156-57.

[3] Macquart, *Iran Śahr*, vol. I, p. 100.

[4] S. Beal, *op. cit*. vol. I, Intro. 99-100.

[5] According to Ghirsman (*Les Chionites Hephthalites*, Cairo, 1948, p. 32), Hephthal conquered Jabul in the fourth century A. D., when Shapur II was ruling over Persia. His argument is based on the legend, *Shāho Jāb* inscribed on a coin found in Shaktabad. The headdress (*mukuṭa*) of the king on this coin resembles that of Bahram IV of Persia (A. D. 388-99) But the coin does not bear the name of any king which shows that the king, if any, was not at all known. He might have been an ordinary governor or a kṣatrapa. Thus, the account of Sung-Yun is more

The above discussion may now be summed up: the Ephthalites occupied the country of Gandhāra or the North-Western Frontiers and Afghanistan then ruled over by the later Kuṣāṇas. SungYun's Laelih has been identified by Cunningham with the father of Toramāṇa which is wrong as we have already shown elsewhere. They settled there and in the succeeding period directed their ferocious attacks against the Gupta empire which was weakened after the death of Skandagupta. Their attacks became quite frequent and contributed much to the decline and fall of the Gupta empire in later years when Toramāṇa and Mihirakula succeeded in bringing considerable portions of the empire under their possession. The Hūṇa inroads brought about great strain on the Guptas as a result of which their coinage degraded both in purity of gold as well as in the design and execution of the dies.

Opinions differ as to the extent of damage caused by the Hūṇa invasion of the Gupta empire. The nature of the inscriptional evidence tends to suggest that this Hunnish inroad took place probably during the concluding years of Kumāragupta's reign itself. Some scholars even suggest that it was during this war with the Hūṇas that Kumāragupta died and the war was successfully carried by his worthy son and successor Skandagupta, notwithstanding the early vicissitudes, to a glorious victory. Unfortunately, we have no positive evidence either to support or to reject this theory. Though it is generally believed that the Puṣyamitra invasion took place during the concluding years of Kumāragupta's reign causing temporary eclipse of the Gupta power, we have, however, no reference to this significant episode in the epigraphic records of Kumāragupta himself. It is the Bhitarī inscription of his son Skandagupta that, for the first and last time, lifts the veil and gives us an idea of the memorable event. On the other hand, Kumāragupta's extensive coinage and the wide distribution of his inscriptions and the find-spots of his silver coins show that he retained intact his father's empire including the Central and

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convincing and nearer the truth than this particular piece of numismatic evidence of doubtful nature (Also see Buddhaprakāśa, *op. cit.* p. 67 fn. 112).

Western provinces.[1] The Mandaśor inscription claims that his suzerainty extended over "the whole earth which is decked with the rolling seas as with a rocking girdle, which holds in its breast-like mountain altitudes the founts of the vivifying liquid, and smiles with the flowers of its forest glens"[2] The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* also describes him as the "excellent" and "leading" sovereign. He also issued a separate silver currency for circulation in Western India which is remarkable for its beautiful style and artistic execution. In the face of these literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidences it may confidently be suggested that he maintained the glorious record of his predecessors for a fairly long time, but towards the end the empire was suddenly dragged in a bloody war with the Puṣyamitras and following them, the Hūṇas which terribly got on his nerves and caused his untimely death.

We know from the silver coins that Kumāragupta ruled till 136 Gupta era, *i. e.* 455-56 A.D. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* also states that Mahendra's kingdom was invaded by the Yavanas, Pahlikas and Śakunas who first fought amongst themselves. They took possession of Gandhāra and the countries north of the Gaṅgā. Thus, it seems that during the later part of his reign, the north-western frontiers of the empire were invaded by horde after horde of barbarians, consisting of the Kuṣāṇas, the Hūṇas and others. Kumāragupta sent a formidable army under Skandagupta to check the onrush of these invaders who were successfully repulsed and chased by him. Then followed the Puṣyamitra invasion of Central India which was also crushed. The strain of this continued warfare was felt by the treasury and the emperor was compelled to issue coins of impure gold, and soon after he died (c. 455-56 A.D.).

This rather abrupt end of his successful career probably explains the absence of epigraphic and numismatic data bearing on his wars against the Puṣyamitras, and also possibly the

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[1] *PHAI*. p. 477.

[2] Sircar, *op. cit*. p. 293, verse 23 :
"चतु (स्समुद्रान्त)-विलोल मेखलां सुमेरु-कैलास-बृहत्पयोधराम्
वनान्त-वान्त-स्फुट-पुष्प-हासिनीं कुमारगुप्ते पृथिवीं प्रशासति"

Hūṇas as well as a terrible mess caused by the unstable and anarchic political condition following the break-up of the administrative machinery in the border provinces which bore the brunt of these invasions. It produced a demoralising effect in other parts of the empire, otherwise seized of nervousness and defeatist mentality. The country needed men of the calibre of Samudragupta and Candragupta II to ensure her protection against the foreign menace, and fortunately in Skandagupta she got an ideal leader and indomitable warrior who fully rose to the occasion, mobilised all possible resources, battled against disastrous odds and finally converted the initial reverses into a glorious victory which finds an echo in his Junāgarh and Bhitarī records that constitute our only soure of information regarding this thrilling episode. As this event occurred in the beginning of Skandagupta's reign, the above suggestion merits our serious consideration and cannot easily be ruled out as untenable and preposterous. There is no doubt that even during his father's life-time the over-all command of the imperial forces fighting against the enemies vested in Skandagupta who, after his father's death, became the full-fledged monarch and successfully completed the difficult task assigned to him when he was a mere crown-prince. Thus, the scattered threads of evidences, when pieced together, very much tend to support the view that the Hunnish inroads, following in the wake of the Puṣyamitra invasion, took place probably towards the last years of Kumāragupta's reign, but were successfully repulsed by Skandagupta only after the former's death. [1]

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[1] R. D. Benerjee is perhaps the only scholar who suggested that Skandagupta "died fighting the Hūṇas" (*Age of the Imperial Guptas*, pp. 47-49). We need hardly add that there is absolutely no basis for such assumption, and the epigraphic records are too explicit on this point to warrant any further discussion. Also see A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that* was *India*, pp. 66-67.

From the Buddhist text, *Candragarbha-paripṛcchā*, we have yet another interesting information regarding this fight. It is said that a certain king Mahendrasena, born in Kauśāmbī, had a valiant son. When the latter was only twelve, his father's kingdom was invaded by three foreign tribes–

As against this, the suggestion that "warfare between the Ephthalites and the Guptas started shortly before A.D. 470"[1] seems absolutely uncalled for, and the epigraphic records of the period warrant against any such hurried assumptions. From all accounts it is clear that this war took place either in the concluding years of his father's reign or just in the beginning of his own reign which in either case was successfully conducted and carried to the final victory under his inspiring leadership. That he "proudly boasts of his victories over the Hūṇas"[2] in a rock inscription (*i.e.* the Bhitarī inscription) is no hollow boast: on the other hand, it has full justification, keeping in view all the historical data bearing on this event; and it is just a figment of imagination to suggest that he "boasted of his military prowess too soon."[3] In fact, it was a well-merited victory, judging by any standard, which thoroughly demoralised the Hūṇas and packed them off to a distant land beyond the frontiers of the Gupta territory. The observation that the Gupta monarch "experienced a long series of defeats which ended in the almost complete destruction of the Gupta empire",

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Yavanas, Pahlikas and Śakunas–in concert, who took possession of Gandhāra and the country to the north of the Gaṅgā. The brave young son of the king led his father's army numbering two hundred thousand men against the army of the enemy numbering two hundred thousand. The prince defeated the enemy and won the battle. Thereupon his father crowned him king saying: "Henceforth rule the kingdom". After this episode, the new king fought these foreign enemies for twelve years and ultimately captured and executed the three kings of the enemies. Jayaswal suggests that this story refers to the fight between Skandagupta and the Hūṇas (*IHI*. p. 36). We have shown above that the battle never continued for such a long period. It was a temporary passing phase and, therefore, no reliance can be placed on the details of such stories (also see *GVA*. p. 178, fn. 1).

The first part of this story is strikingly similar to the one described in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, noted above.

1. McGovern, *The Early Empires of Central Asia*, p. 415.
2. *Ibid*, 415.
3. *Ibid*, 415.

and that "with the death of Skandagupta which took place about 480 A.D. the Gupta empire may be said to have come to an end," [1] is all the more preposterous and betrays complete ignorance of the history of the period and after. The contemporary epigraphic records make it abundantly clear that there is no scope for such sweeping generalisations and far-fetched conclusisons. The fact is that Skandagupta experienced difficulties in the beginning on account of this sudden and unexpected fierce invasion but he soon overcame the various odds and inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy. Besides, he died about a decade earlier than 480 A.D. while the Gupta empire continued to flourish much later which is borne out by numerous epigraphic, numismatic and literary records. It is also now an established fact of Gupta history that after this event the Gupta empire faced no external aggression for about fifty years.

It has been rightly suggested that the assumption of the title of 'Vikramāditya' by Skandagupta [2] symbolises his great achievement that saved the Gupta kingdom from the scourge of a cruel barbaric invasion. It was quite befitting the victor of the Puṣyamitras and the Hūṇas to have adopted this celebrated title to mark the end of the foreign menace which at one time seemed to undo the glorious achivements of his forefathers. Moreover, this was in consonance with the Gupta tradition, for his grandfather had also adopted the same title to mark his great victory over the formidable Śakas of eastern Mālwā who had once similarly threatened the territorial integrity of the Empire. The Hūṇa menace seems to have been effectively put to an end before the Gupta year 138 (457-58 A. D.) which is strongly supported by other inscriptional evidences. The Kahāum stone-pillar inscription of Skandagupta (Gupta year 141 = A.D. 460) speaks of the tranquility[1] obtaining throughout the length and breadth of the empire. The Indor copper-plate inscription of Skandagupta (Gupta year 146 = A.D. 466)[2] refers to his augmenting victory all around and the Gaḍhwā inscription (Gupta year 148 = A.D. 468).[3] mentions his ever-increasing victory and great prosperity. All these definitely indicate that the Hūṇa invasion took place in the beginning of his reign and the frontiers of the empire remained intact notwithstanding the early vicissitudes, and he remained the sole master of the vast empire including Western Mālwā and Kāthiawāḍ or Surāṣṭra. The Hūṇas were thoroughly driven out of India proper and they retired to Gandhāra and Afghanistan and henceforward they got entangled with the Sassanid empire of Persia from where they could proceed only after the death of King Firuz (484 A. D.).

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[1] *Ibid.* 416.

[2] *GVA*. p. 39. The memory of his achievements is popularly preserved in the story of Vikramāditya, son of Mahendrāditya, narrated in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, xviii. From the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* we further learn that Skanda was also called 'Devarāja'.

All honour, therefore, to Skandagupta who arrested the disruptive forces about to devour the Gupta empire by the might of his arms and singular skill. He quelled the menace of the Puṣyamitras and allied recalcitrants and inflicted such a crushing defeat on the Hūṇas that his name became a terror in the land of the barbarians.[4] He established a stable administration by appointing able governors in the northern and western provinces. These achievements were enough to create tremendous impression in the hearts of the Indian people who adored him like a national hero, sang his exploits from the very childhood [1] and forgot celebrated warriors like Rāmcandra after witnessing the great prowess of his arms. [2] In fact, he shone as the born leader of men in the hour of the gravest crisis facing the nation and proved much greater than many of his great predecessors, in the past.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 309 :
“यस्योपस्थान-भूमिर्नृपति-शत-शिरः-पात-वातावधूना
गुप्तानां वन्शजस्य प्रविसृत-यशसस्तस्य सव्वोत्तमर्द्धे :
राज्ये शक्नोपमस्य क्षितिप-शत-पतेः स्कन्दगुप्तस्य शान्तेः”

[2] *Ibid.* p. 310 :
“यं विप्रा विधिवत्प्रवुद्ध-मनसो ध्यानैकताना स्तुव :
यस्यान्तं त्रिदशासुरा न विविदुर्न्नोर्ध्वं न तिर्य्यग्गति (म्)
यं लोको वहु-रोग-वेग-विवशः संश्रित्य चेतोलभ :
पायाद्व : स जगत्पि (धा) न-पुट-भिद्रश्म्या करो भास्कर :”

[3] Fleet, *CII.* III. No. 66.

[4] *ABORI.*, 1946, p. 127.

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[1] Cf. the Bhitarī pillar inscription (Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 314):
"चरितममलकीर्त्तेर्गीयते यस्य शुभ्रं
दिशि-दिशि परितुष्टैराकुमारं मनुष्यै :"

[2] *Kathāsaritsāgara*, xviii :
"दिव्यासुयोधिनं तं च पश्यन्राजसुतं जनः
मन्दरादरोऽभूद्रामादिधनुर्धरकथास्वपि"

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND PHASE

TORAMĀṆA

The first phase of the Hūṇa invasion of India may be described as an episode in the history of the land without any far-reaching consequences. The Hūṇas came, thay raided and they were thoroughly defeated and routed. Their withdrawal, though temproary, from the Indian scene marked the ultimate collapse of their first serious attempt to establish an empire in India. It, however, produced an indirect result. It accelerated the pace of the dismemberment of the Gupta empire by encouraging outbreak of rebellions in border provinces and fissiparous tendencies all around. Inspite of all his efforts Skandagupta could not save the westernmost part of his empire from future troubles. It is true, during his life-time he retained his hold over Surāṣṭra, the Cambay coast and the adjoining portions of continental Gujarāt and Mālwā, [1] but it is also equally true that though he had arranged efficiently for the defence of his territories through scrupulous selection of his viceroys, governors and commandants of his army as is clear from the Junāgarh inscription, neither he nor his father before him had taken due care to guard the north-western gates of India. They were completely neglected by Kumāragupta 1, and the Chinese historians have also recorded the destruction of the cities of Bactria and Afghanistan by the foreign invaders, first the Kuṣāṇas and finally the Hūṇas, And, Skandagupta, too, can not be said to have put an end to the further devastation of the country by the Hūṇas once and for all : he merely postponed that tragedy.[2] His successors, however, do not appear to have been so fortunate, for we have not a single inscription or a coin to show that those frontier territories including Surāṣṭra and Western Mālwā formed parts of the Gupta empire after his death.

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[1] *PHAI*, p. 489.

[2] Dandekar, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

The withdrawal of the strong arm of Skandagupta from the political scene was the signal for the disintegration of his mighty monarchy. With the provinces in turmoil, the foreign barbarians once again started pouring across the western gates of the empire and a disunited people could not long resist the united forces of the barbarian hordes led by a great general. Thus, with the passing away of the last great Gupta monarch (c. 467 A.D.), the fissiparous forces were again unabashed, and a dash and grab followed on all sides. The empire declined, especially in the west, but did not wholly perish. The sudden stoppage in silver currency after Skandagupta which was intended for the western provinces probably points to the termination of the Gupta authority in those regions and the general debasement of gold currency does unmistakably suggest a time of troubles. [1]

Epigraphic and literary evidence, however, suggests the continuance of the Gupta empire in parts of central and eastern India in the latter half of the fifth as well as the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. The Sāranātha inscription,[2] the Dāmodarapur plates[3] and the Eran stone-pillar inscription[4] of Budhagupta prove that from A.D. 473 to 495 the Gupta empire extended from Bengal to eastern Mālwā. Besides these, the Betul plates of Parivrājaka Mahārāja Saṁkṣobha (Gupta year 199 = 518 A. D.) "during the enjoyment of the sovereignty of the Gupta king" speak of the Gupta sovereignty over Ḍabhālā (Ḍāhala) including the Tripuri Viṣaya (Jubbalpur region). [5] The Khoh copper-plate inscription of Saṁkṣobha (Gupta year 209 = 528 A.D.), [6] the Eran stone-pillar inscription of Bhānugupta (Gupta year 191 = A.D. 510) [7] and few other records [8] prove that the Gupta empire definitely included some of the Central districts even in A.D. 528. Thus, a careful perusal of the epigraphic records of the successors of Skandagupta and those of the contemporary kings [1] leaves little doubt that even in A.D. 600 (the time of Prabhākaravardhana) the sway of the Gupta dynasty extended, though loosely, from Mālwā to the Brahmaputra. [2]

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[1] *ABORI*, 1946, p. 128.

[2] Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 323–24.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 324–26, 328–30.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 326–27.

[5] *EI.* viii, pp. 284–87.

[6] Sircar, *op.cit.* p. 374.

[7] *Ibid*, p. 335.

[8] *Ibid*, p. 370 ff.

But all told, the fact remains that the vast Gupta empire had started shrinking fast in dimensions after the death of Skandagupta (467 A.D.), and while the power and prestige of the Guptas was on the wane, that of the new rising kingdoms was on the wax. The hereditary character of the officialdom, particularly in some of the outlying provinces, let loose centrifugal forces which gathered momentum and strength as the central authority weakened owing to the continuous onslaughts of the barbarian hordes.

Skandagupta's successors Purugupta and Kumāragupta Kramāditya or Kumāragupta 11 (A.D- 467–77) had short reigns and it appears from epigraphic and numismatic evidences that they succeeded in maintaining the integrity of their loosely-knit empire during their life-time, although Ujjain is said to have been exposed to the invasion of the Hūṇas and the envy of the refractory chieftains of the west. [3] Kumāragupta II (son and successor of Skandagupta) is said to have been a vigorous ruler during whose reign the silk–weavers' guild repaired their temple of Sun (damaged by the barbarians) at Mandsor (western Mālwā) in 473 A.D. and acknowledged the suzerainty of the Gupta empire. He continued the struggle against the Hūṇas and arrested their onrush who were, inspite of their defeat, troubling the frontiers of the Gupta empire through sporadic raids, and steadily swarming like locusts in the north–west to swoop down upon the smiling plains of

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1. *Ibid*, p. 337 ff.

3. *JRAS*, 1903, p. 561, *PHAI*, p. 493.

3. *ABORI*, 1946, p. 128

Madhyadeśa.[1] The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[2] also testifies to his might and virtuous nature in eloquent terms.

Budhagupta, son of Purugupta, was a vigorous ruler and has a number of dated inscriptions and coins to his credit, which prove that he ruled for a long period, *ie.*, about 20 years (A. D. 476–96), and held sway over most parts of the empire including Central India as well as Kāśī and North Bengal. The Eran stone-pillar inscription of Budhagupta (Gupta year 165= A. D. 484)[3] is an important document, for it sets at rest all controversies regarding the so-called occupation of Central India by the Hūṇas after the death of Skandagupta, or even during his life-time as some scholars would have us believe. It unequivocally speaks of the erection of a *dhvajastambha* or flag-staff in honour of Janārdana, *ie,* Viṣṇu, in 484–85 A.D., by Mahārāja Mātṛviṣṇu, ruler of Eraṇ, and his brother Dhanyaviṣṇu, while the *Bhūpati* (king) Budhagupta was reigning, and Mahārāja Suraśmicandra was governing the land between the Kālindī (Yamunā) and the Narmadā. In other words, Budhagupta's dominion included, besides other provinces, Central India as well.[4] The inscriptional evidence is further supported by numismatic evidence as the coins of this emperor dated in the year 495–96 A. D. continue the Peacock type of Gupta silver coinage, specially issued for circulation in the central and western territories of Mālwā and Gujarāt. The legend claims Budha to be the lord of the earth and the conqueror of heaven. But, the suggestion that the reverse of these silver coins "beautifully epitomises the great achievements of the emperor"[1] seems far-fetched and uncalled for, as such legend is also found on the silver coins of Kumāragupta I and Skandagupta and is, therefore, mere repitition of the traditional dynastic epithets neither symbolising any new achievement of Budhagupta nor commemorating any momentous event of his life. The simple fact is that he retained control over most of his paternal dominion, and was undoubtedly a great monarch of his dynasty.

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[1] *Bhaviṣyottara Purāṇa* (*JBORS*, xxx. pt. i, pp. 1–47) :
"अन्यकुमारगुप्तोऽपि पुत्रस्तस्य महायशा :
क्रमादित्य इति ख्यातो हूणैर्युद्धं समाचरत"

[2] Jayaswal, *IHI*, pp. 35, 60; Gaṇapati Sāstri's edn. p. 630.

[3] Sircar, *op. cit*, pp. 326–27.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 326–27 :
"...शते पञ्चषष्ट्यधिके वर्षाणां भूपतौ च बुधगुप्ते...कालिन्दीनर्म्मदयोर्म्मध्यं पालयति लोकपालगुणैर्ज्जगति महाराज श्रियमनुभवति सुरश्मिचन्द्रे च ।
"...चतुः समुद्र-पर्य्यन्त-प्रथित-यशसा अक्षीण-मानधनेनानेक-शत्रु-समर जिष्णुना महाराज-मातृविष्णुन [।] तस्यैवानुजेन तदनुविधायिना [।] तत्प्रसादपरिगृहीतेन धन्यविष्णुना च ।..."

It is also argued that, as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* describes Kumāragupta II as "the powerful lord of the Gauḍas"[2] (*nṛpatirgauḍānāṁ*), Mālwā was pobably outside the pale of the Gupta empire from A. D. 467-76 and Budhagupta vigorously pursued the task of restoring the fortunes of the Gupta empire first by conquering it sometime about 484–85 A. D., and then by rehabilitating its administration on sound lines. The argument is based evidently on the Eran pillar inscription which bears exactly the same date. But, we are not told how, when and by whom Mālwā had been wrested away from the Guptas. The inscription, in question, has, however, nothing to suggest that the *dhvajastambha* in honour of Lord Viṣṇu was erected to commemorate the victory of Budhagupta over Mālwā and its re-occupation thereafter. It is written in the usual form and style as is found in similar other epigraphs marking the installation of the image of some gods or goddesses or land-grants to the Brāhmaṇas. Indeed, it has nothing unusual either in tone, texture or style to read different meanings into it or to interpret it otherwise. Moreover, the acknowledgement of the paramountcy of the Gupta emperor by Hastin in one of his copper-plates dated A. D. 483 in Central Provinces,[3] leaves no scope for such interpretations as it clearly shows that just prior to the engraving of the said Eran inscription Gupta suzerainty was well established over the central region. Moreover, the evidence of the *Mañjusrīmūlakalpa* in this respect can not be taken to mean that his suzerainty was confined only to Eastern India whereas Central Provinces were lost to some other power. The statement is vague and does not find corroboration from any other source which in this case is rare. The numismatic evidence (*eg.* his Archer type coinage), on the other hand, tends to suggest his influence over central part as well.

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[1] *ABORI*, 1946, pp. 131–32.

[2] Jayaswal, *IHI*. p. 50 :
"यस्यापरेण नृपतिर्गौडानां प्रभविष्णव :
कुमाराख्यो नामतः प्रोक्त : सोऽपि स्त्यन्तधर्मवान्"

[3] Fleet, *CII*. III, No. 22. We have the following expression :
"गुप्तनृपराज्यभुक्तौ…"

It has been further suggested that Budhagupta fought against the Maitrakas and the Vākāṭakas who had forcibly occupied Mālwā after the death of Skandagupta, and conquered it back from them. [1] As regards the Maitrakas we know that the Maitraka dynasty ruled over Kāthiawāḍ peninsula with Vallabhī as its capital from 500 to 770 A. D. The kings of this dynasty have left numerous epigaphic records, a close perusal of which shows that although the Maitrakas were gradually growing powerful, and the Gupta authority was slowly weakening, the Gupta monarch nevertheless was acknowledged as suzerain in 502 A.D. [2] Thus, there is absolutely no scope for the above assumption that Mālwā was conquered by the Maitrakas and it was later re-conquered by Budhagupta in c. 584–85. A. D.

It is true that the Vākāṭaka king Narendrasena is described as the overlord of Mālwā in his son's record, but we have no sufficient ground to support this contention. It appears that when the prospects of the Gupta emperor (Kumāragupta I) of re-establishing his authority in the distant provinces of his empire seemed very remote in c. 455 A. D., due to his troubles with the Puṣyamitras and the Hūṇas, the local feudatory in Mālwā had for sometime transferred his allegiance to the Vākāṭaka king Narendrasena "in the hope that he may assist him in maintaining his own position in the troubled times" [3] because the prestige of the Vākāṭakas had tremendously increased at this time by their overthrow of the Nala power. But Mālwā did not long remain under the Vākāṭaka influence and came back under the Gupta overlordship during the reign of Skandagupta. Since then we have no evidence to the contrary to suggest that this part of the empire was lost, and regained during the time of Budhagupta.

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[1] Saletore, *Life in the Gupta Age*, chap. I.

[2] *VGA*, p. 187.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 118.

We have yet another statement suggesting that "it is not impossible that the western part of Central India had been gradually conquered by the Hūṇas during the later years or after the death of Skandagupta".[1] It has been shown above that this part of the Gupta empire remained intact till the time of Budhagupta, though it had been temporarily ravaged by the Hūṇas in the course of their fight with Skandagupta, as the Mandsor inscription of Bandhuvarman, noted above, tends to suggest. This inscriptional evidence is strongly supported by the coinage of Budhagupta. He issued a silver coinage of the Central India type or the Madhyadeśa type with his name inscribed on it. This type is exactly similar to that of Kumāragupta I or Skandagupta bearing the legend : *vijitāvaniravanipatiḥ-śrī Budhagupto divaṁ jayati.*[2] Thus, he ruled over the whole empire from Bengal to Western India[3] and, to some extent, rehabilitated the lost glory of the Guptas though it was like the last flicker of the extinguishing lamp. As the last date on his coins is 176 Gupta year, *ie*, A. D. 496,[4] it is but natural to conclude that the Hūṇas had not captured any part of the Gupta dominion till that time. Mereover, we have no evidence of the Hūṇa depradations to the east of Gandhāra till the close of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A. D. Infact, all the political convulsions and upheavals took place only after the death of Budhagupta when the Hūṇas, already poised for action on the north-western border, had really a smooth run in many parts of the empire.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 327 fn. 4.

[2] Altekar, *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, p. 278, pl. xxvi. 20.

[3] Dandekar, *A History of the Guptas*, pp. 139. 149.

[4] Altekar, *op. cit*, p. 278, pl. xxvi, 20.

Thus, the period after 484 A.D. (*ie*, towards the close of the fifth century) marks a turning point in the history of the Guptas when, besides the local chieftains, their suzerainty was successfully challenged for the second time by the fierce Hūṇas who, after having settled their accounts with the Sassanid monarchs after the death of Firuz (A.D. 484), made another terrible dash towards the unstable and restless frontiers of the Gupta empire, as it were with a vengeance. While the passing away of Skandagupta had seemingly removed all impediments to their steady advance, the death of Budhagupta (c. 496–97 A.D.) finally removed the last obstacle in their naked aggressive designs. Taking advantage of the weak central authority, now utterly disorganised and dangerously exposed owing to fissiparous tendencies among the ambitious warring chiefs, who had begun asserting their independence one after another, they swooped down upon the north-western provinces of the empire and eventually made themselves masters of the Punjab (Sialkot region), Kashmir, part of Rajputana and eastern Mālwā whose chiefs preferred security to resisting the new menace by humbly transferring their loyalty and allegiance to the new leader (the Hūṇa chief).

This was not at all surprising for, in an explosive situation like this, the provincial chiefs, who largely constituted a class of rank opportunists and traitors, always loved to worship the rising sun rather than remain loyal to, and stand by, their old masters in the hour of their crisis. Devoid of all sense of patriotism and national honour, these bands of self-seekers and fortune-makers wanted to exploit the situation to their best advantage by meekly submitting to the advancing Hūṇas whose leader, Toramāṇa was quick to sieze this opportunity by grabbing large portions of the sinking empire without much effort on his part. They penetrated into the Indian interior as far as Citrakūṭa and conquered the Eraṇ district in the northern part of the present Central Provinces. Thus, the death of Budhagupta marked the end of that semblance of unity in the major part of the empire that was seemingly preserved till his time, and the erstwhile beaten Hūṇas once again spread in devastating hoardes over some of the fairest provinces of the country which had now neither a Candragupta nor a Skandagupta to force them to lick the dust of defeat and humiliation. What the Hūṇas under Hepthal II could not achieve inspite of their mighty arms, the Hūṇas under Toramāṇa did with the least efforts and succeeded in building a kingdom as far as Central India which they were now destined to rule for some time and played a significant part in the history of India-both politically and culturally.

THE RISE OF TORAMĀṆA (C. 500–515 A.D.)

The leader of this second wave of the successful Hūṇa invasion was Toramāṇa, a general of remarkable personality whose political achievements in India were no less great than those of Alexander and Menander. Rather, he outshone them in many respects. He was the first foreign conqueror in India who built up a vast empire from Central Asia to Central India and advanced right up to Pāṭaliputra and further beyond.

A ruthless follower of blood and iron, a veritable incarnation of hell and a born fighter and destroyer, he swept away everything before him like a surging storm and atlast gave the Hūṇas a stable home since their rout from their original home in Mongolia. After Attila, he was the only general who re-organised the Hūṇas under his inspiring leadership, stirred them on to move ceaselessly in search of a new home and established an empire which lasted for about a hundred years. Indeed, the story of the rise of Toramāṇa is the story of a nation re-born which makes a fascinating study in the history of India and forms a popular theme with many of the great contemporary writers.

Like most of the great generals of history Toramāṇa also emerged from obscurity and had no claim to high ancestry or glorious past. Like a meteor he shot up into the sky, shone brilliantly for a while and soon consumed himself into the darkness of history. Through conflagration and death; battles and the terrors, the reck and the cries, across heaps of corpses, and to the accompaniment of the agonised curses of the innocent, dying civilians and the exultant shout of plundering soldiers rose Toramāṇa, a new star in the political firmament of India, whose only companion was his sword and whose only love was conquest and bloodshed. Starting as an ordinary soldier he soon caught the eyes of his Ephthalite master due to his dash and courage and was appointed the *Tegin* or Viceroy of the newly acquired territories of Gandhāra and Afghanistan on the north-western frontiers from where he directed his ferocious attacks against the mainland of India. Thus, at first subordinate to the supreme Ephthalite ruler who still continued to reside in Bactria, this official so affected and extended his conquests in India as to become one of the greatest monarchs of the age and "by his glory completely overshadowed his nominal suzerain who remained the semi-barbarous ruler of Central Asia."[1]

LINEAGE AND EARLY CAREER

But unlike other great generals his origin is completely wrapped up in obscurity. We have no knowledge of his geneology, of his parents and of their position and status in the Hūṇa hierarchy. Almost all the sources of our information are silent on this point : they simply refer to his name and achievements in brief and mysteriously pass over. The meagre information, we have, is of so vague and confusing nature that it is very difficult to rely on them and eke out an intelligible story. A veil of mystery sorrounds his early career which has given rise to numerous speculations regarding his tribe and race. In all the ages men of low beginnings rising ultimately to the highest stature through sheer perseverance and merit have been subject to such persistent inquiries, and Toramāṇa is no exception to this general rule. Some scholars have even questioned his Hūṇa origin and have suggested that there was a revival of the Kuṣāṇa power in the latter part of the fifth century A.D., under the leadership of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula. The two tribes, being ethnically allied, were later merged into one nation and came to be known as the Hūṇas when they appeared on the Indian seene in the beginning of the sixth century A. D. In other words, the question now being seriously posed is : who was Toramāṇa, was he a Kuṣāṇa or a Hūṇa ?

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[1] McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 415. Also see Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 225; J. Macquart, *Erānśahr*, Berlin, 1901.

It is suggested that the possibility of his being a Kuṣāṇa chief can not altogether be ruled out.[1] Jayaswal[2] and Fleet[3] believe that Toramāṇa was a Kuṣāṇa. Sten Konow[4] thinks that Toramāṇa was probably a Hūṇa, and not a Kuṣāṇa. The annals of the three Chinese dynasties assert that the Ye-tha or Ephthalites belonged to the race of the great Yue-chi,[5] to which the ruling Kuṣāṇa family in India is said to have belonged. In other words, the Ephthalites or the White Hūṇas constituted a branch of the great Yue-chi and both the Kuṣāṇas and the Hūṇas came from the same stock and there was striking resemblance in manners and customs between them and the Turks. His name 'Toramāṇa', which is neither Sanskrit nor Prākṛt, is probably of Turkish origin, where *toremān*, *tūrámān* or *toremen* means "a rebel or insurgent."[6] The title *Jaūvla* accordingly should be connected with *jvl*, 'a falcon'. Alberuni mentions a Laga-Turman as the last king of the 'Thibetan' (?) or Turk Shāhi dynasty of northern India among whom was Kanik (Kaṇiṣka ?)[7].

These considerations have prompted Bühler and, following him, Keilhorn to suggest that Toramāṇa of the Kurā inscription[8] is possibly not identical either with the Toramāṇa of the Eraṇ inscription or with the Toramāṇa of Kashmir mentioned by Kalhaṇa or with the Toramāṇa of the coins found in different parts of the country. He was in all probability an independent king, for "the fact that this Toramāṇa bears the title or surname *Shāha* or *Shāhī* and receives the epithet *Jaūvla*, which may be a tribal name or *biruda*, is sufficient to prevent the identification with the other Toramāṇas who are not characterised in this manner."[1] We, however, fail to understand what prevented Bühler and Keilhorn from identifying the Toramāṇa of the Kurā inscription with the Toramāṇa of the Eraṇ inscription and the Tormāṇa of Kashmir who, they agree, flourished during the same period (fifth century A. D.). The history of India records the rise of only one Toramāṇa as a great conqueror and monarch and as such the question of the so-called other Toramāṇas does not arise at all in this context.

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[1] *VGA*. p. 182.

[2] *JBORS*, xviii, p. 20 ff; xvi, p. 287 ff.

[3] *IA*. xv. p. 245.

[4] *IHQ*. xii, p. 532.

[5] M. A. Stein, *IA*. xxxiv, p. 84.

[6] Bühler, *EI*. i, p. 239.

[7] *Alberuni*, ii (trans. Sachau), p. 13.

[8] *EI*. i, p. 238 ff.

Smith, [2] Rajendralāl, Bhāu Dāji and others have, however, no doubt of the identity of this king with the Toramāṇa of the Eraṇ record, while Cunningham [3] expresses doubts and regards the Toramāṇa coins which he ascribes to Kashmir as the unauthorised issue of a pretender, "though we must express that we feel sceptical as to the existence of two contemporary Toramāṇas in northern India during this period." [4]

The two inscriptions of Mihirakula from Uruzgan (Central Afghanistan) [5] and the Kurā inscription of Toramāṇa from the Punjab, [6] bearing the surname, *Shāhī* or *Shāha* and the epithet *Jaūvla* speak of the early occupation and settlement of these areas by the Hūṇas. These records were engraved by the royal order, whereas later inscriptions such as the Eraṇ inscription and the Gwālior stone inscription were inscribed by the Indian feudatories of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula respectively who refer to their overlord as *Mahārājādhirāja* without mentioning the tribal surname and the dynastic epithet which seemed quite redundant in this context and was not always considered necessary. There are innumerable instances of such deliberate omissions of royal prerogatives in the epigraphic records issued

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1. *Ibid*. i. p. 239 ff.
2. *JASB*, 1894, p. 186.
3. *Transactions*, p. 232; *Num. Chron*., 1894, pp. 276–78.
4. For details see *Infra*, p. 87 fn. 2.
5. ed. A. D. H. Bivar in *JRAS*, London, 1954, p. 112 ff.
6. Sircar, *op. cit*., p. 398; *EI*, i, p. 239.

by feudatories in the name of their suzerains and sometimes in the royal record itself. The inscriptional evidence is further supported by numismatic evidence as also some of the coins of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula do not bear the above titles. But, this does not necessarily mean that the Toramāṇa of the royal records should be distinguished from the Toramāṇa of the records issued by his feudatories.[1] The adoption of the title *Shāhī* (borne by Kaniṣka and his successors) by Toramāṇa and his successors may also be explained by the fact that the Hūṇa king wished to appear as the rightful successor of the Kuṣāṇa morarchs,[2] whose territory he had conquered. The so-called tribal *viruda—Jauvlā* or *Zabol* really stands for a section of the Hūṇas who, on their way to India, first settled in a land called Zabulistan to the south of the Hindukush (*i. e.* Afghanistan) of whom Toramāṇa was a scion and later a *tegin* or a viceroy. The literal meaning of his name well reflects his activities as viceroy who later severed all his relations with the Hephthalite monarch living in Bactria and founded an independent kingdom of his own in India. There is thus no cogent reason for assuming that Toramāṇa of the Kurā inscription is a different personality from Toramāṇa of the Eraṇ record. Really, they are one and the same person.

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[1] Cunningham identifies Toramāṇa Jaūvla with the prince called Jabūīn in the *Cacanāmā*, a history of Sindh which states that Jabūīn had built the temple of Sun at Multan. He holds that this Jabūīn was the first of the Ṣāhī dynasty and obtains A. D. 505 as the date for the foundation of the above Sun-temple, by reducing 137 years, the duration of the Ṣāhī dynasty, from A. D. 642, the date when Caca Brāhmaṇa became the king of Sindh (*Transactions of International Congress of Orientalists*, London, 1893, vol. i, pp. 226, 228–29; *Arch. Rep.* vol. v, pp. 115–21, Pl. xxxvii; *Num. Chron.* 1894, p. 268, Pl. x).

Modi, on the authority of Firadausī's *Shāhnāmā* suggests that the title *Ṣāhī* of the Indian inscription of Toramāṇa is the same as *Ṣāhī* of Firadausī and *Jau* is really Jaugan or Jaugani, which is another variant of Firadausī's *Caganī*. He holds that the Hūṇa king was called *Caganī* as the Hūṇas were especially connected with Cagan, their favourite place which they were eager to retain in their hands. It is said that when Kubad, the Persian monarch, sought the help of the Hūṇa king Khusnawaz, the latter asked the former to agree to the proposal that he would never claim Cagan to which he readily agreed. In other words, Toramāṇa belonged to the family or stock of Caganī, a variant of Firadausī's Fagani, Fagāna or Toramāṇa (J. J. Modi. *JBBRAS*, xxiv, 1927, pp. 586–87).

[2] Stein, *IA.*, 1894, p. 83.

The account of the Chinese traveller, Sung-Yun who visited Gandhāra in A. D. 520, also indirectly confirms the identity of the two. He says : "this is the country which the Ye-thas destroyed and afterwards set up a *tegin* to be king over the country since which events two generations have passed." We have shown elsewhere that Mihirakula, the son of Toramāṇa, had been ruling in 520 A. D., and thus the Chinese account would point to a time when Toramāṇa had been living (c. A. D. 496). We know it for certain that Toramāṇa started his career as a *tegin* under the supreme Ephthalite king in Bactria and later declared his independence in 500–510 A. D. These sundry pieces of evidences, when knit together, make it absolutely clear that Toramāṇa of the Kurā record is identical with Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula. [1]

This question was first raised by K. P. Jayaswal [2] who gave a new explanation of the name *Mauna* occurring in the Purāṇas as the designation of an ancient Indian dynasty, with variants such as *Maula, Mona, Yauna, Jana, Hūṇa.* According to him, *Yauna* is the original form which is identical with the Kuṣāṇas. This conclusion is obviously based on the Kurā inscription of Toramāṇa [3] where Jayaswal corrects Bühler's reading : *mahārāja-Toramāṇa-ṣāh-jaūvlaḥ* ("of the great king Toramāṇa Ṣāha Jaūvla) reading *jaūvṇaḥ* instead of *jaūvlaḥ.* He finds a support for his reading, *jaūvṇaḥ* in the Hūṇa coin illustrated in Rapson's *Indian Coins* [4] where he reads : *ṣāhī*

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[1] Also cf. S. Chattopādhyāya, *Early History of North India*, p. 194.

[2] *JBORS*. xviii, p. 201 ff. ; xvi, p. 287 ff.

[3] *EI*. i, p. 238 ff.

[4] p. 29, pl. iv, fig. 18.

Javūvṇaḥ in place of *ṣāhī Javūvlaḥ*. He further observes that "the title *Tukhāras, Maruṇḍas, Yaunas* (*Yauvas*) of the Purāṇas may be compared with Samudragupta's *Sāhānuṣāhi-śaka-Muruṇḍas*. The *Sahānuṣāhi*...... stands for the Tukhāras and the *Śaka-Muruṇḍas* for *Muruṇḍas* and *Yauvas*.". The title, *Jauva*, we are told, "occurs in the Taxila copper-plate inscription where the official is subordinate to the Kṣatrapa. It seems that under the Tukhāras or the Kuṣāṇas the title was current and that the Yauvas were actual rulers."

Sten Konow was partly responsible for this explanation. In his edition of the Taxila copper-plate [1] he read *jaüvañae* and explained *jaüva* as a variant of the well known title *Yavuga, Yaüa* etc. His reading and explanation have, however, since been proved to be wrong by Thomas [2] who read : *mahadanapati Patika Sajauvajhae* (*na*) *Rohiṇimitreṇa* ("the great gift-lord Patika together with the Upādhyāya Rohiṇimitra") and it has been accepted by Sten Konow himself. [3] In view of this, it is hardly possible to accept Jayaswal's conclusions.

In our opinion the readings *jaūvlaḥ* in the Kurā inscription and *jaūvlaḥ* on the coins are absolutely certain and *jaūvl*–, or *javūvl* is a title, and not a name. The argument of Bühler regarding the identification of Toramāṇa of the Kurā and Eraṇ inscriptions is far from convincing.

Konow has rightly suggested that the Eraṇ inscription is metric, and "there would not be room for more titles than the imperial *mahārājādhirājaśrī*, and, besides, it belongs to the king's first year." [4] The fullest coin-legend gives *vijitāvanir avanipati śrī Toramāṇa*, in imitation of Gupta coins, and no inference can be drawn from this state of things. Bühler's objection would be "of little weight if *ṣāhi jaūvla* could be shown to be titles occurring elsewhere in the dynasty to which Toramāṇa belonged. And, such is actually the case." [5]

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[1] *CII*, ii.

[2] *Göttingische gelebste Anzeiger*, 1931, p. 6.

[3] Sten Konow, "Note on Toramāṇa" in *IHQ*, 1936, p. 530 ff.

[4] *Ibid*. p. 531.

[5] Sten Konow, *op. cit.* p. 532.

Alberuni places Kanika *i. e.*, Kaniṣka, in the dynasty of the Ṣāhī rulers of Kabul whose last king is referred to as Laga Turman, mentioned above. On this analogy Jayaswal draws the inference that they were all Kuṣāṇas. There is no doubt, they traced their descent to Kaṇiṣka, but they were hardly of Iranian stock, they only took over the traditions of their predecessors.[1]

The 'Kuṣāṇa-Sasanian coins' discussed by Herrfeld[2] also include those ascribed to different Ephthalite kings and bear the legend *soho Zobol, i e. ṣāhi Zabul.* Junker[3] also discusses some Ephthalite coins with legends containing the words *śaho* and *Zūbolo.* According to Henning, *Zabolo* must be a title, and it seems evident that here we have the exact counterpart to the *ṣāha jaūvla* of the Kurā inscription. And, it is necessary to draw the inference that we have to do with titles commonly used by the Ephthalites. *Ṣāhi* is of course the old title used by the Kuṣāṇas, which had been adopted by the Ephthalites.[4] It is possible, and perhaps probable, that *jaūvla, Zowolo* was also borrowed from elsewhere. The collocation of these two titles in Hephthalite legends and in the Kurā inscription shows that our Toramāṇa was a Hūṇa, and not a Kuṣāṇa. There is, therefore, no cogent reason for assuming that he was another person than the Toramāṇa of the Eraṇ inscription.[5]

As there is no mention of the term, Hūṇa in the epigraphic records as well as the coins of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, the identification of Toramāṇa has persistently been questioned by scholars. The Eraṇ inscription of Dhanyaviṣṇu, dated in the first year of Toramāṇa calls him *mahārājādhirāja śrī Toramāṇa* while the Kurā inscription refers to him as *rājādhirāja mahārāja Toramāṇa ṣāhi Jaūvla.* The two records, when read together, mark two distinct phases in his career. The latter unmistakably points to his status in the beginning as a feudatory chief when he was in possession of Afghanistan and Gandhāra (or the Punjab) whereas the former establishes him as a full-fledged Indian monarch who had conquered Mālwā, Rājasthān, Kashmir and other Indian territories, besides his earlier acquisitions. Even the show of this so-called feudatory status in the beginning was not real but pretentious. Infact, he was now an independent king, having practically no relation with his erstwhile master residing in Bactria. But he seems to have continued his nominal allegiance to the Ephthalite ruler for some time in order to consolidate his position and territorial exploits in India. Supposing, however, *Jaūvla* was his feudatory title which he continued to use, there is reason to believe that he no longer held a feudatory status. The continued use of the feudatory titles like *mahākṣatrapa* and *senāpati* by the Śaka kings of Ujjain and Puṣyamitra Śuṅga even after latter's celebration of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice speaks of the conventional camouflaging tactics adopted by the rebel chiefs to dupe their masters as well as the subjects, even when they actually became independent.[1] But, unlike other feudatory titles, *Jaūvla* does not in the least convey any such sense. Granting that it is a feudatory title, this is understandable in the case of Toramāṇa only, there is no reason why Mihirakula should have continued this humiliating practice [2] even when his nominal link with the Bactrian monarch was long snapped with the result that he was now regarded as a great Indian monarch who had completely taken to the Indian way of life.

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 532.

[2] *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India,* No. 38, p. 19 ff.

[3] *SPAW,* 1930, p. 650 ff.

[4] Quoted Sten Konow, *op. cit.,* p. 532.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 532.

The inscriptions of Mihirakula found in Uruzgan also bear the titles *saho Zobol* or *sāho Jabula* which, as Bivar suggests, was the official title of the dynasty.[3] The whole of the great mountainous district of the upper waters of the Helmand and the Kandahar, (*i. e.*, Arghandab) rivers was known to the Arabs as Zābulistan, a term of vague application.[1] Hamdullah Mustaufi [2] says : "Zabul is a province, both broad and long, which was of old a kingdom." Firadausī makes repeated reference to Zabulistan, and since he wrote at Ghazni, close at hand, he must have been well aware of its location. He describes it [3] as grouped with Kābulistan, Bust and Ghaznin, under the charge of a *marzban.* Whatever the exact boundaries of the regions, there can be little doubt that Mihirakula's Uruzgan inscriptions lie at the heart of Zabulistan.[4] In our opinion, therefore, *Jaūvla* or *Zabol* symbolises his new home in Zabulistan and *Ṣāhī,* the official title of the dynasty, not his feudatory title.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 398 fn. 4.

[2] Cf. his silver and copper coins.

[3] *JRAS*, 1954, p. 115 ff.

Viewed in this context the use of the title *Jaūvla* in one record and its omission in the other is quite significant as it symbolises the two different phases in the life of the man who had started as a petty local chief of a semi-independent principality and had eventually made himself master of a vast territory. Thus he was now not only a local king of Zabol, but a prominent monarch of northern India in his own rights and as such no longer posed to appear as the rightful successor of the Kuṣāṇa monarchs, This attitude is also reflected in the different types of silver and copper coins issued by Toramāṇa and Mihirakula.[5] Some of these coins bear the titles *Ṣāhi* and *Jaūvla*, but there are others which do not. We, therefore, submit that these titles have actually no relation to his feudatory status : on the other hand, they speak of the stock to which the White Hūṇas belonged and of the original home where they first settled after their departure from Persia for India.

Howsoever vague the Hūṇa records may be, the contemporary Indian records make it abundantly clear that Toramāṇa was a Hūṇa. The Mandsor stone inscription of Yaśodharman (c. 525–535 A. D.), the victor of Mihirakula, refers to the latter as *Hūṇādhipa.*[1] Moreover, the successors of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula are invariably mentioned as *Hūṇa* in the later epigraphic records such as the Udepur Praśasti of the kings of Mālwā,[2] the Copper-plate inscription of Vākpati Muñja from Gaonri (Ujjain),[3] the Nālandā plate of Dharmapāla,[4] the Una grant of v.s. 956 of the Pratihāras, the Ajmer *Harikeliṇāṭaka* inscription of v.s. 1210 of the Cāhamānas, the Atpur inscription of v.s. 1034 of Guhila Allaṭa, the Khairha inscription of k.s. 823 of Kalacuri Karṇa[5] and others. The *Harṣacarita*[6] of Bāṇa refers to the Hūṇas as having been subdued and conquered by Rājyavardhana in Uttarāpatha or the Punjab. All these evidences are sufficient to prove that Toramāṇa was a Hūṇa and was known to Indian tradition as such for long.

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[1] Le Strange, *The Land of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 349.

[2] Trans. Le Strange, p. 144.

[3] Ed. Mohl, *Valash*, 1. 27.

[4] *JRAS*, 1954, p. 117 fn. 1.

[5] Cf. V. A. Smith's paper, "History and Coinage of the Gupta period" in *JASB*, 1854, p. 185 ff.

The recent discovery of his two seals in Kauśāmbī should finally set all the controversies at rest. These seals were discovered in the excavations of the monastery of Ghoṣitārāma, one counter-struck by letters *To Ra Ma Ṇa* and the other with the legend *Hūṇa-rāja* evidently referring to the same king.[7] The arrow-heads of type (K) provide another evidence of Hūṇa conquest of Kauśāmbī under Toramāṇa sometime between c. 513–515 A. D.[8] In the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[9] also, he is clearly addressed as *Hakārākhyaḥ* (or "H-initialled") and is described as coming from the west and as a great king of Śūdra caste. (... *hakārākhyo mahanṛpaḥ* ...). There is

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1. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 394–95.
2. *EI*. i. pp. 225, 228, 237.
3. *IA*. xxiii, p. 108 ff.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
5. Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 315 fn. 1.
6. p. 326. "अथ कदाचिद्राजा राज्यवर्धनं कवचहरं हूनान्हन्तुं...उत्तरापथं प्राहिणीत"
7. G. R. Sharma, *The Excavations at Kauśāmbī (1957–59)*, pp. 15–16.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
9. p. 57; Jayaswal, *IHI*. p. 64.

thus nodoubt that the expression *hakārākhyaḥ* or "H–initialled" describing the Śūdra king stands for the Hūṇa Toramāṇa.

There is yet another controversy regarding the identity of Toramāṇa. The Ephthalite coins bear the name of a king, Rāmanila whose portrait on the coins is depicted facing left, not right, which speaks of his independent status. Ghirsman identifies this king with Toramāṇa but hardly advances any argument in favour of his contention.[1] It is also suggested by another writer that probably Rāmanila flourished earlier than Toramāṇa and founded the new kingdom of Zabulistan in c. 455–56 A. D., when the other Ephthalites were still fighting with the Sassanians and were gradually swarming on the north-western frontiers of India under the leadership of Hephthal II. In other words, the family of Rāmanila was different from that of Toramāṇa.[2] Our only source of information on this point is the meagre numismatic evidence which simply gives his name, and nothing more. Further, we have the account of Sung-Yun which speaks of the kingdom of Gandhāra (evidently under the later Kuṣāṇas) as having been destroyed by the Ye-thas or the White Hūṇas and the setting up of Lae-lih as their king, about two generations ago.[3] These statements, coming from two different sources, when pieced together, may tend to suggest that the Rāmanila of the coins is probably identical with the Lae-lih of Sung-Yun. But the difficulty is that the numismatic evidence makes it clear that Rāmanila held an independent status and could not have been subordinate to the supreme Ephthalite ruler, as otherwise he could not have issued coins in his own name. The Chinese source, however, definitely indicates that Toramāṇa was a *tegin* or viceroy in the beginning and as such his father (if he is to be identified with Lae-lih) could not have been an independent king or chief. Lae-lih is not known to us from any other source except the account of Sung-Yun. We, therefore, suggest that Rāmanila was an independent local king of Gandhāra, prior to the coming of the Ephthalites, who having established his supremacy, borrowed the technique of the coins issued by the local rulers under Sassanian influence, just as Toramāṇa and Mihirakula issued coins in their newly acquired Indian territories on the pattern of the Gupta coinage. Lae-lih, on the otherhand, was a petty chief or governor, appointed by the Ephthalite ruler residing in Bactria, to rule over the area. That "he was father of Toramāṇa and led the Hūṇas into India and succeeded in occupying Mālwā by c. 500 A. D." [1] is all the more doubtful because in that case he ought to have been referred to in the inscription of Toramāṇa just as the latter is expressly mentioned in the epigraphic record of his son and successor Mihirakula. [2] Had he enjoyed independent status, there is no reason why we should not have come across either his coins or epigraphic records ?

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[1] R. Ghirsman, *Les Chionites Hephthalites*, p. 35.

[2] Buddhaprakāśa, *op. cit.* p. 66.

[3] Beal, Records, i. Intro. p. xcix.

Cunningham suggests that "the Udayāditya coins may have been struck by Lae-lih, the father of Toramāṇa." [3] But this ascription is merely conjectural and doubtful, for there is absolutely no reason to suppose that he ever adopted the title of Udayāditya which is purely Indian in origin and all available evidences suggest that it was Toramāṇa who first assumed the Indian title of *mahārājādhirāja.* His view can be accepted only when we assume that Lae-lih is identical with Toramāṇa himself. Marquart has also shown that the name 'Lae-lih', given to this ruler, in Beal's translation is purely apocryphal, based solely on a misinterpretation of the Chinese characters rendering the Turkish title *tegin*, 'prince.' [4]

Thus, in the absence of any positive historical data, it seems that Lae-lih was either the Ephthalite chief prior to the rise of Toramāṇa or that he is to be identified with Toramāṇa himself. Moreover, the conquest of Mālwā was effected by Toramāṇa in c. 500 A. D., as an independent ruler and Lae-lih, as a predecessor of Toramāṇa can on no account be associated with this event mentioned in contemporary epigraphic records. In the light of the above discussion, it seems that the suggestion of Marquart that the terms *Lae-lih* and *tegin* have been confused by the translators and that these really stand for one person only, *i.e.*, Toramāṇa, is quite convincing, as this identification almost clears the confusion and quite conforms to the facts of contemporary history.

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[1] *DKM.* p. 87.

[2] Cf. the Gwalior Stone inscription of Mihirakula (Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 400–02).

[3] *Transaction*, p. 228 ; *Num. Chron.*, 1894, p. 285 ff.

[4] Marquart, *Erānśahr*, p. 211 ff.

WARS AND CONQUESTS

Toramāṇa is credited with having fought many battles and won victories first as a *tegin* and then as a monarch. He established a vast empire and greatly influenced the contemporary politics of northern India, through his direct and active participation. He started as a soldier and died as a soldier spending his whole life in bloody warfare and exploits, and gave the Hūṇas a permanent home and a new cultural stature. A great conqueror, he was also a great organiser and administrator. Nevertheless, his cultural achievements were far greater than his political exploits for it was with him that the process of Indianisation of the Hūṇas began which completed with Mihirakula with the result that the Hūṇas were no longer considered as foreigners in India and were ultimately completely absorbed in Hindu society which accorded them a distinct place in early mediaeval times.

As regards his achievements we have the following evidences directly bearing on his reign which may be summarised as follows :

(i) The inscriptional evidence includes the Kurā stone-inscription of Toramāṇa (c. 500–515 A. D.), the Eraṇ stone boar inscription of Toramāṇa (c. 500–510 A. D.), and the Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula (c. 515–535 A. D.). These records give an idea of his territorial extent from the Punjab to Central India, besides Gandhāra and Zabulistan or Afghanistan. No other epigraphic records of Toramāṇa are known.

(ii) There are three types of silver coins of Toramāṇa: (a) The *Horseman type* with the Ephthalite symbol behind the horseman on the obverse and the legend in the Greek characters, *ṣāhi Javula* or *ṣāhi Janabula* on the reverse. These coins were issued probably before 510 A. D.; (b) the *Sassanian bust type* with marginal legend in Gupta characters, *ṣāhi Jabūvlaḥ* or *Jabul* on the obverse and indistinct reverse. It is curious that these coins bear no name whatever, though Toramāṇa's Indian as well as Kashmirian, imitated coins are inscribed with his name, and (c) the *Fantail peacock hemidrachm type* with the king's head to left and date apparently in the same era as Toramāṇa's 54 on the obverse and the Fantail peacock device with the legend with vowel marks: *vijitāvanir-avanipa* including the king's name completely obliterated on the reverse.

(iii) There are small copper coins of the *Sassanian bust type* attributed to Toramāṇa found both in the Punjab and in the country between the Sutlej and Yamunā rivers. Their attribution is based on the type of the *Sun* with the abbreviated name *Tora* in large bold Gupta characters of a late type. Recently four copper coins of Toramāṇa collected from Sanghol in the eastern Punjab were published by A. K. Narain,[1] which further confirm his rule over the area.

(iv) We have two seals of Toramāṇa discovered in Kauśāmbī bearing the legend *Toramāṇa and Hūṇarāja,* referred to in the preceding pages. These seals are unique as they throw ample light on the conquests of Toramāṇa as far as Kauśāmbī as well as his political influence in the adjoining areas.

(v) The account of the Chinese traveller Sung-Yun also refers, though indirectly, to his kingdom in Gandhāra and the Swat valley (Udyāna), which was then being ruled over by his son Mihirakula.

(vi) Udyotana Sūri, the Jaina author, in his Prākṛt work, *Kuvalayamālā (campū)* compiled in 699 s.e. (777–78 A. D.) says that the celebrated town of Pavvaiya on the banks of the river Candrabhāgā (Chenāb) was the residence of Torarāya (Toramāṇa) and he enjoyed the sovereignty of the world or the *uttarāpatha*.[1] We get the following information from this Jaina work :

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[1] *JNSI*. 1962, pp. 41–42.

(a) "Torarāya is the celebrated Hūṇa monarch Toramāṇa who shook the Gupta empire to its very foundation and extended his authority as far as Mālwā (c. 499–510 A. D.);

(b) "Torarāya had a guru by the name of Harigupta who was himself a scion of the family of the imperial Guptas."[2]

This work has been subjected to rigorous criticisms by a number of scholars in respect of its historical value. The author came from the Deccan which was totally immune from the depradations of the Hūṇas and as such he has based his account on mere hearsay or legends. The work is, therefore, more of romantic nature than of real historical character. Moreover, Toramāṇa never championed the cause of Jainism and had no claim to remembrance by a Jaina author. It is on this basis that K. P. Mitra has branded him as "a non-descript Rājā."[3]

But, in spite of all these criticisms, the mention of this king in this work is especially interesting as there can hardly be aǹy doubt about the identity of this name with the celebrated Hūṇa monarch, Toramāṇa. While we know that Sākala

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[1] *Jaina Siddhānta-bhāskara* (v. s. 1983, Āṣāḍha), Dec. 1953, pp. 1–6 ; S. Chattopādhyāya, *The Śakas in India*, p. 76 ff. We quote below the relevant verses of the *Kuvalayamālā* :

"सुइदिअ चारुसोहा विअसिअकमलाणणा विमलदेहा ।
तत्थत्थि जलहिदइआ सिरिआ अह चंदभाय त्ति ॥
तिरम्मि तीय पयडा पव्वइया णाम रयणसोहिल्ला ।
जत्थित्थि ठिए भुत्ता पुहइं सिरि तोरराएण (तोरमाणेण)॥
तस्स गुरू हरिउत्तो आयरिओ आसि गुत्तवंसओ ।
तीय णयरीय दिण्णो जेण णिवेसो तहिं काले ॥"

(Quoted in N. C. Mehta's paper "Jaina Record on Toramāṇa" in *JBORS*., xiv, p. 30).

[2] *IHQ*. vol. xxxii, p. 353 ff.; *JBORS*, xiv, p. 34.

[3] *IHQ*. vol. xxxii, p. 354 ff.

(modern Sialkot in the Punjab) was the capital-seat of his famous son, Mihirakula, we have been hitherto totally ignorant of the headquarters of Toramāṇa himself. It is from this work that, for the first time, we know that his headquarter was at Pavvaiya on the banks of the Chenāb (Candrabhāgā). This is the *Po-fa-to* or *Po-la-fa-to* of Yuan Chwang,[1] though even now we are not in a position to identify this ancient place-name with its exact counter-part in the Punjab. It was most probably somewhere near Sākala.

The work poses another question—who was this Harigupta whose pupil was Devagupta, himself a great poet ? In 1894 Cunningham found at Ahicchatrā a copper coin with the inscription : *Mahārāja Devaguptasya* and the well-known Jaina symbol of a *kalaśa* with a flower on the reverse. This symbol still survives among the Jainas as the pot and flower as the auspicious marks on every festive occasion. However, the usual Gupta symbol on the coins is an image of a horse, Lakṣmī or a warrior with a bow, Garuḍa etc. usually according to the taste of the reigning monarch. Thus, the marks of the *kalaśa* and flower are significant for they would be appropriate if Devagupta were a Jaina. This Devagupta has been assigned to the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A. D. on the epigraphic evidence of the coin, which certainly tallies with the age of Devagupta mentioned by Udyotana Sūri, and styled by him as the royal sage—*rājarṣi*, the pupil of Harigupta and contemporary of Toramāṇa.[2]

We have two manuscripts of this work—the Jaisalmer MS. and the Poona MS. In the former, which is earlier, we have *Siri Tora-rāyena* and in the latter *Toramāṇena*. Evidently the two names are identical and stand for Toramāṇa. His *guru* or preceptor, Harigupta is stated to have belonged to *Gupta vaṁśa*. The suggestion that Harigupta, the *guru* of Rājyavardhana, was identical with Harigupta, the *guru* of Toramāṇa, can not be chronologically supported. Besides, we

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1. N. C. Mehta, *op. cit.* p. 34.
2. *Ibid.* p. 35.

have no evidence to show whether Toramāṇa became a convert to Jainism or he just patronised it as a matter of political expediency like many other kings professing other faiths. It is possible that he may not have been a Jaina himself but was considerably influenced by his Jaina *guru.* Moreover, it is difficult to identify Harigupa, though the identity of Toramāṇa and his conversion to Buddhism is established beyond doubt.[1]

(vii) The *Ārya-mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* also throws some interesting light on the activities and achievements of the Hūṇa king. It is from this work that we learn for the first time that he had conquered territories as far as Magadha and extended his influence in Banaras and its adjoining territories.

(viii) And, lastly the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa also refers to both Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, though their history as recorded therein can hardly be reconciled with the known history of the two Hūṇa monarchs. The information that we get is, however, valuable as it helps ascertain facts known from other sources.

The conquests of Toramāṇa may be placed in two phases : in the first he consolidated his authority in Kabul, Gandhāra and the north-west frontier provinces as far as the Punjab and Kashmir[2] before 496 A. D. which is strongly supported by his Kurā inscription in the Salt Range, the *Harṣacarita* and by the numerous silver and copper coins found in those regions; and in the second, he advanced on the Gupta territory after the death of Budhagupta towards the end of the fifth century A. D., wrested a good portion of the Western province of the Gupta empire, established his authority in that area and built up a strong principality up to Mālwā. It was during this period of his stormy march that great ancient republican tribes like the Yaudheyas, the Mālavas, the Madras and the Ārjunāyanas inhabiting the Punjab and the adjoining tracts of Rajputana, so long spared and respected by the Gupta monarchs, were now completely routed in the Hūṇa avalanche, and finally wiped off the map of republican India. The epigraphic records show that they continued till the reign of Kumāragupta I, but the rise of the Hūṇas marked the tragic end of the thousand year old republican and constitutional tradition.

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[1] For further details see N. C. Mehta, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–38; R. K. Choudhary, *op. cit.* p. 121.

[2] We have shown in the preceding pages that on the basis of some of the copper coins bearing the name of Toramāṇa found in Kashmir, Cunningham believes that there were two Toramāṇas—that of Kashmir being of perhaps later date than the White Hūṇa chief whose exact date is not known. In his *Coins of Mediaeval India* (p. 391), however. Toramāṇa is dated A. D. 520 and made to be contemporary with the White Hūṇa chief. Cunningham's remarks on this subject (For details, see *Transactions of International Congress of Orientalists*. London, 1893, vol. i, pp. 228–29) based mainly on the evidence of his copper coins, are very interesting, though some of the proposed tests, advanced by him, are

Dashing beyond, Toramāṇa took Magadha, Banaras and Kauśāmbī in the course of a lightening march causing terrible depradations. Thus, within twelve years, the Hūṇas under Toramāṇa established their main centres of power at Pavvaiya on the Chenab, Sākala (modern Sialkot), Eraṇ (Madhya Pradeśa), Mālwā (Central India), and brought Magadha, Kāśī and Kauśāmbī under their sphere of direct influence. It was no doubt a wonderful feat for any conqueror to have accomplished within so a short time.

But here again we are confronted with yet another problem—when did this Hūṇa conquest in the interior of India begin?

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open to serious criticism. It is difficult to accept his view that Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir are the unauthorised issue of a pretender. Moreover, he contradicts his own views propounded in his *Coins of Mediaeval India* and also discussed at greater length by him in another place (*Num. Chron.*, 1893, pp. 190–93). The fact is that Toramāṇa of Kashmir is no other than the Toramāṇa of Mālwā and must as such be dated 510-514 A. D. (also see Fleet's view in *IA.* xv, 1886, p. 245); *Infra*, chap. vii.

A critical perusal of the available sources bearing on the conquests of Toramāṇa would suggest that the Hūṇas or the Ephthalites entered India proper between c. A. D. 500 and 510. A comparative study of the three inscriptions from Eraṇ—Eraṇ stone-pillar inscription of Budhagupta (A.D. 484), Eraṇ stone-pillar inscription of the time of Bhānugupta (A. D. 510), and Eraṇ stone boar inscription of Toramāṇa (c. 500–510 A. D.) [1] —definitely points to the beginning of Toramāṇa's rule in 500 A. D. or immediately after it, though he may have succeeded to the leadership of the Hūṇas about 470 A. D. or perhaps even earlier [2] as viceroy, for he appears to have had a rather long reign.

The Eraṇ inscription of Budhagupta (484 A. D.) says that the region lying between the Yamunā and Narmadā rivers was governed by one Mahārāja Suraśmicandra, while one Mātṛviṣṇu was the *viṣayapati* of the division of Airikiṇa or Eraṇ. [3] The inscription of Bhānugupta [4] (A. D. 510) from the same place informs us that he went there with the purpose of conquest and his general Goparāja fell in the battle and his wife committed *satī*. [5]

The inscription of Toramāṇa dated in the first year of his reign speaks of one Dhanyaviṣṇu, the brother of Mātṛviṣṇu, who had acknowledged the supremacy of the Ephthalite ruler. [6] The above epigraphs clearly show that the *viṣaya* of Airikiṇa (Eraṇ) passed from the Guptas to the Ephthalites, for Dhanyaviṣṇu, the brother of Mātṛviṣṇu transferred his royalty to

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1. Sircar, *op. cit.* pp. 326–27, 335–36 & 396–97.
2. Fleet, *CII*, vol. iii. Intro. 10–12.
3. Sircar, *op. cit.* pp. 326–27.
4. *Ibid.*, No. 38, pp. 335–36.
5. *Ibid.*, verses 3–4 :

   "श्रीभानुगुप्त जयति प्रवीरो राजा महान्पार्थ-समोऽति शूरः
   तेनाथ सार्द्धन्त्विह गोपराजो मित्रानुगत्येन किलानुयातः
   कृत्वा च युद्धं सुमहत्प्रकाशं स्वर्ग्गंगतो दिव्य नरेन्द्र-कल्पः
   भक्तानुरक्ता च प्रिया च कान्ता भार्य्यावलग्नानुगताग्निराशिम्"
6. *Ibid.*, No. 55, pp. 396–97.

Toramāṇa who is glorified as a great monarch (*mahārājādhirāja*) who "caused the mountains to tremble with the blows of his hard snout." [1]

We have shown above that Budhagupta died after 496 A. D. during whose time Eraṇ was for all practical purposes an integral part of the Gupta empire. The tragedy overtook the empire only after his departure from the political scene and that paved the way for the realisation of the long cherished dreams of Toramāṇa. It is not known when Dhanyaviṣṇu actually came to succeed his brother but there seems little doubt, the event took place during the time of Budhagupta himself, probably towards the end of his reign. Following the examples of other local chiefs Dhanyaviṣṇu also asserted his independence after Budhagupta, the withdrawal of whose mighty arm had let loose centrifugal forces all around causing serious political convulsions and chaotic disorder throughout the empire. But he was not destined to live long in peace. The long-poised armies of Toramāṇa rushed unchallenged and unobstructed and soon overran the whole tract including Eraṇ which lay on the advancing route. The episode must have taken place in c. 500–502 A. D. when Dhanyaviṣṇu, taking discretion to be the better part of valour, submitted to the new lord and transferred his loyalty instead of taking the risk of fighting the powerful invader and losing his newly won independence—a fact which is confirmed by the Eraṇ inscription of Toramāṇa.

The Eraṇ inscription of Bhānugupta says that he fought against the Hūṇas after a decade of Budhagupta's reign (*i. e.* in 510 A. D.) and Goparāja, the brave general, fell in the battle. The inscription is quite vague as it refers to his fight with the enemy but mysteriously keeps silent about the ultimate victory. It does not even mention the enemy by name and passes silently over the outcome of the battle. In other words, it simply refers to the battle and nothing more. [2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, No. 55, v. 1 :
"जयति धरण्युद्धरणे घन-घोणाघात-घूर्णित-महीद्ध्रः……"

[2] *Ibid.*, No. 38, verses 3–4.

It is presumed, and rightly so, that the enemy must have been the Hūṇas under Toramāṇa who had, as far as our information goes, by then established themselves as masters of those regions, as the very tone of the record suggests. In fact, he does not seem to have advanced to check the sweeping thrust of the enemy : on the other hand, he made a desperate but bold attempt to rout the enemy from those lost territories where they were now deeply entrenched, but failed in his mission. Had it been the other way about, the epigraph must have recorded this great victory in no uncertain terms. But, the lack of positive expression in the record leaves one in no doubt that the disintegration of the empire had gone too far to be checked and the goddess of fortune had deserted the Guptas forever.

In view of this, the suggestion that "the Ephthalite conquest of Eraṇ and the interior of India began in c. 510 A. D., and the inscription of that year shows that Bhānugupta came to check the inroad but failed" or their "occupation of... India came to an end in 510 A. D. by the conquest of Bhānugupta" [1] seems erroneous and the suggestion of Chavannes that "no part of India proper" was included within the Ephthalite empire as late as 500 A. D. [2] sounds quite unconvincing.

This gives rise to the problem of Toramāṇa's first regnal year as mentioned in his only epigraph, *i.e.*, the Eraṇ epigraph. His Kurā inscription is also undated. Its date can not be made out, only the final *ma* of the ordinal giving the year being preserved. Sten Konow suggests that it is perhaps possible to read *caturaśitime* 'eighty fourth', in which case the inscription would be about thirty years later than the Toramāṇa coins which are said to be dated in the year 52 of an unknown era. It would thus be unwise to base any conclusion on such a doubtful reading. [3] We have, therefore, no alternative but to take recourse to the interpretation of the first regnal year as mentioned in his Eraṇ inscription. There is nodoubt that

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1. S. Chattopādhyāya, *Early History of North India*, p. 193.
2. Chavannes, *Documents Sur les Toukine Oecindentaux*, pp. 224–26.
3. Sten Konow, "Note on Toramāṇa" in *IHQ*. 1936, p. 532.

the *viṣaya* of Airikiṇa passed from the Guptas to the Ephthalites sometime in c. 496–500 A. D. The Eraṇ inscription of Bhānugupta clearly says that he fought against the enemy "after a decade of Budhagupta's reign," *i e.*, in 510 A. D. It has been shown above that the Hūṇas were already entrenched in the north-western provinces and the Punjab, even during the time of Budhagupta, whence they rapidly advanced either during the last year of Budhagupta's reign or immediately after. Thus, a study of these records suggests that the conquest of Eraṇ must have taken place in c. 500–02 A. D. which also constituted the first regnal year of Toramāṇa's reign in India proper. The authority of the Chinese sources, in this respect, cannot be taken to be unimpeachable as we know that the Chinese annals have not seriously discussed Toramāṇa's advance in "India proper" and have mentioned it only by way of passing reference, contrary to their detailed discussion of the events relating to the Hūṇa conquests in other parts of the world.

While the Eraṇ inscription of Toramāṇa mentions his first regnal year, two of his British museum silver coins (Fantail peacock hemidrachm type) are dated in the year 52.[1] To this Hoey's coins add two more dates—54 and 58.[2] The former (the Eraṇ record) suggests the beginning of his rule in India proper where as the latter (his coins) possibly mark the reckoning of some White Hūṇa era beginning in 448 A. D. or near about. A critical study of the two British museum coins and those of Hoey throws an interesting light on this problem. The legend on the coin dated 58 is damaged and every letter of the king's name can not be read with certainty. There is, however, nodoubt that the name begins with *Ś* and Smith asserts that the reading is : *Śrī Śarvvavarmadeva jayati*... This Sarvavarman was the son and successor of Īśānavarman Maukharī.[3] But the era in which all these coins are dated is yet undetermined and problematical. Fleet takes the 52 date to be a regnal year. "It is plain," he observes, "that Toramāṇa did exercise sovereign sway in the Punjab at the beginning of his career, and before he commenced the campaign in the course of which he eventually reached Mālwā. If, now, we interpret the year on his coins as a regnal year, it certainly indicates a long reign. But analogous instances could he quoted for this; and no special exception need be taken to it. And, this interpretation of the date is at any rate better than the assumption that it is reckoned from some period, anterior to Toramāṇa's accession at which his own branch of the Hūṇas first rose to power; for that would mean that, not satisfied with the Śaka era, which was the hereditary and national era of that part of the country, and probably of his own ancestors also, he sought to establish a new era, dating from that event. This, accordingly, is the interpretation of the date. And, reckoning back from 515 A. D., which is very closely the latest terminal date that can be applied, it follows that the commencement of his reign, at his own capital in the Punjab, is to be placed approximately in A. D. 460." [1]

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[1] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 194 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

This interpretation of Fleet is not satisfactory and is further rendered absolutely impossible by the discovery of coins of other kings dated evidently in the same era, and must for that, and for other good reasons, be rejected. [2] And, Cunningham's suggestion that the era used is the Śaka, with hundreds omitted, is, for several reasons, equally untenable. [3] The best solution of this problem seems to be that the date is probably expressed in a special White Hūṇa era, commencing from c. 448 A. D., though Cunningham takes it to be A. D. 456–57, "the only remarkable date in the history of the White Hūṇas" when the "final expulsion of the Sassanians from the countries to the north of the Oxus by Chu-khan" was accomplished.

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[1] Fleet, *IA*, vol. xviii, 1889, p. 229.

[2] Smith, *JASB*, vol. lxiii, 1894, p. 194.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

If "the year 52 be reckoned from this point, we get A. D. 508 or 509 for the establishment of Toramāṇa's rule in Mālwā." 1

From all available accounts it is clear that the date on the coins of Toramāṇa is in a special White Hūṇa era, otherwise unknown to us. M. Drouin dates this Hūṇa era from A. D. 448 2 which fixes with tolerable precision the limiting dates for Toramāṇa. This date, when moved back, gives A. D. 502 (in the case of year 54) and A. D. 500 (in the case of year 52) which very nearly coincide with his first regnal year in India proper, as used in his Eraṇ epigraph. It may, therefore, be suggested that while the regnal year in his only epigraph in the interior of India indicates the beginning of his reign in India proper, the date on his coins is to be reckoned in the Hūṇa era started earlier by his predecessors in Gandhāra and Zabulistan. Later on, the practice of dating in the Hūṇa era was replaced in India by the use of regnal year as is suggested by his inscription and the Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula, and a close study of these different dates reveals that there was practically no difference in calculation whatever between the system of dating from the Hūṇa era and that of the regnal year. This also shows that while the Hūṇa era replaced the Śaka era in those regions, it was not at all popular with the people of his newly acquired kingdom in India, and he was probably obliged to adopt the age-old Indian system of dating in the regnal year, instead of imposing his own era. It may also be possible that with the conquest of new kingdom in India he had achieved an independent status and had no more any charm for an era which he used as a subordinate chief of the Ephthalite ruler in Bactria. In view of this the date of his Kurā inscription should be placed earlier, probably c. 497–98 A. D. The period between 500–512 A. D. was the

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1. Quoted *Ibid.*, p. 195. M. Drouin also dates the Hūṇa era from A. D. 448 (vide—his paper in *Journal Asiatique*, 1890, and also his other paper, "Quelques Noms de Princes Touraniens qui ont régné dans le Nord de l' Inde aux VIᵉ et VIIᵉ Siècles" in *Journal Asiatique*, 1893, pp. 546–50).

2. *Ibid.*; *IA.*, vol. xlvi, p. 287.

period of the consolidation of the power and prestige of the Hūṇas under Toramāṇa in the interior of India, and by 512 A. D. Toramāṇa had conquered a considerable portion of the sub-continent of India and was recognised as a very powerful ruler having his influence as far as Kauśāmbī.

Of the conquests of Toramāṇa in the interior of India, that of Eraṇ seems to have been effected soon after the death of Budhagupta. The Eraṇ pillar inscription of Budhagupta (484 A. D.) says that the brothers Mātṛviṣṇu and Dhanyaviṣṇu were at that time the feudatories of that Gupta sovereign and Mahārāja Suraśmicandra governed the region lying between the Yamunā and Narmadā rivers.[1] The same Dhanyaviṣṇu is mentioned in another epigraph from the same place, namely the Eraṇ stone boar inscription of the Hūṇa king Toramāṇa, dated in his first regnal year. The latter is a Vaiṣṇava inscription and records the building of the temple, in which the Varāha stands, by Dhanyaviṣṇu, the brother of the deceased Mātṛviṣṇu. The mention of Mātṛviṣṇu as deceased indicates that Toramāṇa took over the possession of eastern Mālwā after Budhagupta in whose time Mātṛviṣṇu had set up the column at Eraṇ bearing the inscription of the Gupta sovereign, engraved on the colossal image of the Vārāha incarnation of Viṣṇu.[2] A study of these two inscriptions along with the third inscription of Bhānugupta[3] (A. D. 510) doubtless suggests that Toramāṇa conquered Mālwā before A. D. 510, for the battle at Eraṇ in which Goparāja fell was evidently a battle fought by Bhānugupta and Goparāja against the Hūṇas. It is, therefore, wrong to suggest that "Mālwā was not occupied by the Hūṇas upto 510 A. D."[4] The inscription really refers to an "unsuccessful resistance to the Huṇas' occupation" of Mālwā[5] and its tone and style leave nodoubt that Bhānugupta had just made an endeavour to recover this part of the Gupta territory already lost earlier, and in no case the battle was fought for supremacy of Mālwā for the first time. Moreover, the Eraṇ inscription of Toramāṇa was engraved much earlier than that of Bhānugupta which is confirmed by the change of loyalty on the part of Dhanyaviṣṇu soon after the death of his brother. Had it been otherwise the episode must have found a definite mention in earlier Gupta records. The Eraṇ record of Bhānugupta may, infact, be treated as a historic document preserving "the memory of a struggle for supremacy between the Hūṇas and Bhānugupta,"[1] over a territory which was lost to the Hūṇas much earlier than the actual occurrence of this episode which finally sealed the fate of the Guptas in that area for about a quarter of a century.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 237, verses 3-7.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 396-97.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 335-36.

[4] Jayaswal, *IHI*, p. 40; Dandekar, *A History of the Guptas*, p. 153.

[5] *DKM*, p. 87.

It is also suggested that Bhānugupta had probably "freed Eraṇ from the yoke of Toramāṇa, for the Gupta sovereignty was acknowledged by the Parivrājaka Mahārājas who ruled in the adjoining province from 510 to atleast 528 A. D."[2] This suggestion is further sought to be strengthened by an equally imaginary statement that "in any case...... we may hold that the Gupta suzerainty in this region was soon re-established and continued till atleast 528 A. D. Fifteen years later the suzerainty of a Gupta emperor was acknowledged in north Bengal. It is obvious, therefore, that the Guptas still ruled over the old empire from Bengal atleast to Central India or Eastern Mālwā."[3] That the statement is gratuitous is proved by the mere fact that it is contradicted by the author himself when he says in another place : "it is somewhat strange that if he (Bhānugupta) had really achieved such a great victory it should not have been expressly stated in the record while referring to him."[4] The suggestion, we feel, does not merit any serious notice as we know that Toramāṇa's rule in Mālwā was an accomplished fact and was not terminated in 510 A. D., for he was succeeded by his son Mihirakula who certainly held possession of all the territories conquered by his illustrious father. Infact, there is no evidence whatever to show that the Gupta king succeeded in achieving any substantial result except the death of his able general Goparāja. The Hūṇas appear to have been undeterred in their attempts to extend their power under the brave leadership of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula.[1]

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[1] R. K. Chaudhary, *op. cit.* p. 122.

[2] R. C. Majumdar, *VGA*, 191.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 191–92.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

Thus, the battle of Mālwā was a turning point in the history of the Hūṇas in India, for it was on the battle-field of Eraṇ that the conquering Hūṇas clashed, for the first time, with the resisting forces of the erstwhile victor, the Guptas, who were now fighting with their back to the wall. They had not yet forgotten their humiliating defeat at the hands of Skandagupta who had struck such terror into their hearts that they dared not cross the frontiers of the Gupta territory for long. Even after the passing away of Skandagupta, the past military glory of the imperial forces served as a deterrent with the result that the foreign invaders shuddered at the very prospect of meeting them in an open armed encounter. But, the death of Budhagupta completely turned the scale and the subdued Hūṇas once again issued forth from their hide-outs to measure swords with the disintegrating imperial armies to settle their old accounts once for all, under the brave leadership of Toramāṇa.

The mantle of Skandagupta's leadership had now fallen on the weak shoulders of Bhānugupta who was no match for the Hūṇa leader. The result was tragic. The weak Gupta resistance broke to pieces under the terrific pressure of the violent Hūṇas, thoroughly exposing their weakness as a fighting nation. The man-eater had tasted the blood and it was now impossible to curb his lust for more blood. The Hūṇas became all the more ferocious because they had no longer any illusions about the so-called invincibility of the imperial arms. The victory, as such, was fraught with serious consequences for the weak empire, as it was from this strategic base in Mālwā that Toramāṇa could confidently probe the defences of the Gupta empire towards Surāṣṭra in the west and the eastern provinces in the north-east. Thus, the battle of Eraṇ sounded the death-knell of the Gupta empire and marked the beginnings of the great departure of the Guptas from the Indian political scene. All that was good, all that progress which had been achieved since the establishment of the dynasty, all that gave life to the mechanism of the State, bade good-bye to the land and the great Guptas gradually disappeared from the country by the end of the sixth century A. D., unhonoured and unsung.

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[1] Also cf. B. C. Sen, *Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, p. 235.

After the successful conclusion of the Eraṇ episode, the conquering Hūṇas ultimately burst out of Eastern Mālwā and swooped down upon the very heart of the Gupta empire. The eastern countries were overrun and the city of the Gauḍas occupied. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* gives a scintillating account of this phase of Toramāṇa's conquest. It says that after Bhānugupta's defeat and discomfiture, Toramāṇa led the Hūṇas against Magadha and obliged Bālāditya (Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya, the reigning Gupta monarch) to retire to Bengal :

"The great king 'H-initialled' coming from the west reached as far as the bank of Ganges in the East. This great monarch, Śūdra by caste and possessed of great prowess and armies took hold of that position (bank of the Ganges) and commanded the country round about. That powerful king then invested the town called Tīrtha in the Gauḍa country." [1]

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[1] *Ārya-Śrīmañjumūlakalpa*, ed. K. P. Jayaswal in *IHI*, p. 57 :

"पश्चाद्देशसमायातः हकाराख्यो महान्नृपः
प्राचीं दिशिपर्यन्तं गंगातीरमतिष्ठत
शूद्रवर्णो महाराजा महासैन्योमहावलः
सो तं तीरं समाश्रित्य तिष्ठते च समन्ततः
पुरीं गौड़जने ख्यातं तीर्थाह्वेति विश्रुतः
समाक्रम्य राजासौ तिष्ठते च महावलः"

Before proceeding further we have take note of one significant aspect of this story. The *Āryaśrīmañjumūlakalpa* is a late work (8th century A. D.) and constitutes our only source of information about this episode, which is neither corroborated nor supplemented by literary or archaeological sources. No inscriptions or coins of Toramāṇa or of his son Mihirakula have been discovered in this part of the country nor have we any relative evidence to rely upon. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* story was told and retold by scholars without any corroboration whatever—direct or indirect. But in recent times two seals of Toramāṇa have been discovered by G. R. Sharma during the Kausāmbī excavations [1] which certainly confirm the conquering march of Toramāṇa up to Kauśāmbī and indirectly fully support the story as narrated in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. The discovery of certain deadly weapons in the shape of arrow-heads in the same excavations [2] further confirms that Toramāṇa waged numerous wars and sacked and burned several cities, causing indiscriminate devastations and bloodsheds. Some of the kings surrendered without any resistance while others were defeated and compelled to retire to some unknown destination.

From the narrative of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* it seems that Toramāṇa, to begin with, marched upon Kauśāmbī and sacked the prosperous city, although his Kauśāmbī expedition does not find explicit mention in the Tāntric text. We are simply told that after "having safely entrenched his authority behind the legitimacy of Prakaṭāditya (at Pātaliputra) Toramāṇa returned westward to look after the affairs of the State. But as he cooled his heels at Kāśī, he fell ill unexpectedly and expired. In his last moment he summoned his son Mihirakula to his bedside and appointed him as his successor."[1] This shows that he had advanced from west towards east, overran territories on the way, sacked Kauśāmbī, conquered Kāśī, attacked Pāṭaliputra and having achieved his mission returned again towards the west to stabilise the affairs of his State.

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[1] G. R. Sharma, *The Excavations at Kauśāmbī* (1957–59), pp. 15–16 ; *Indian Arehaeology*, 1954–55, p. 18, Pl. xxxii B (cf. *Toramāṇa* and *Hūṇarāja*).

[2] G. R. Sharma, *op. cit.* pp. 21, 37, 46. In the light of these compelling evidences Chattopādhyāya's observations regarding the Kauśāmbī seal do not appear convincing. We have discussed all the points raised by him in the preceding pages (See, *Infra*, chap. ii ; Chattopādhyāya, *Early History of North India*, p. 280).

The evidence of the Hūṇa conquest of Kauśāmbī was furnished by two seals, discovered in the monastery of Ghoṣitārāma[2] one counter-struck by letters, *To-ra-mā-ṇa*, and the other with the legend, *Hūṇa-Rāja*, evidently referring to the same king. The arrow heads of type (K) provide another evidence of Hūṇa conquest under Toramāṇa, sometime between c. 500–515 A. D. The three types of arrowheads (I), (J) and (K)[4] are valuable additions to our knowledge of the invasions of the Greeks, the Śaka-Kuṣāṇas and the Hūṇas in this region. Of these, however, the barbed arrow-heads type (K) which make their appearance for the first time in large numbers, are obviously the deadly "instruments of massacre, pillage and unprecedented devastations."[5] Their distinctive nature, their close analogy with "those from Taxila and sudden appearance at Kauśāmbī clearly indicate that they were introduced here by the invaders from the north-western regions—the Bactrian Greeks, the Śaka-Parthians and the Hūṇas."[6] From the excavations it is clear beyond doubt that Kauśāmbī could never fully recover from the terrrible Hūṇa depradations.[7]

The sack of Kauśāmbī was followed by his conquest of Kāśī and the adjoining territories. It is true that we have no direct and positive evidence bearing on this phase of the

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1. *IHI.*, p. 51.
2. *Indian Archaeology*, 1954–55, p. 18.
3. G. R. Sharma, *op. cit.* pp. 15–16.
4. *Ibid* , p. 16, see facing map.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

struggle for power in north-eastern India but the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*[1] makes it clear that he overran Magadha also which was then being ruled over by Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya who, it appears, offered a very feeble resistance and was forced to accept vassalage to the Hūṇa conqueror and consequently to pay him tribute. But the identity of this Gupta king has been challenged by several scholars on the basis of Yuan Chwang's accounts which, while preserving a long story about Mihirakula, give us the following information about Bālāditya whose identification is still somewhat a subject of controversy :

"When Bālāditya-rāja, king of Magadha 'heard of the cruel persecution and atrocities of Mihirakula, he strictly guarded the frontiers of his kingdom and *refused to pay tribute.*'

"Leaving the charge of his kingdom to his younger brother, Mihirakula marched against Bālāditya but was defeated and taken prisoner. Later on, he was, however, released at the intervention of Bālāditya's mother.

"Mihirakula, when defeated and imprisoned by Bālāditya, observed that the subject and the master have changed places."[2]

On the basis of this evidence, Raichaudhuri suggested that the conqueror of Mihirakula was not the son of Purugupta (Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya) but an altogether different individual.[3] Others suggest that this Bālāditya is to be identified with Bhānugupta who put up strong resistance against the forces of Toramāṇa.[4] Recently it has been rightly suggested that this Bālāditya is to be identified with Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya, the son of Purugupta, who siezed the Gupta throne after a temporary eclipse following his defeat by the Hūṇa conqueror. This Bālāditya is further credited with many seals and coins and, therefore, it is "unnecessary to postulate the

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1. *IHI*, p. 53 ff.
2. Beal, *Records*, i, pp. 167–69 ; Watters, i, pp. 288–89.
3. *PHAI.*, p. 497, for other details see fn. 1-5.
4. Dandekar, *op. cit.* pp. 153-54 ; *ABORI*, 1945–46, pp. 134–36.

existence of another imperial Gupta ruler with the title, *Bālāditya*."[1]

Other considerations apart, we feel that a close perusal of Yuan Chwang's account itself makes it abundantly clear that the same Bālāditya who was defeated by Toramāṇa, later defeated and imprisoned his son and successor, Mihirakula. He says that the Bālāditya-rāja "refused to pay tribute" to Mihirakula, whereupon the latter pounced upon him furiously but was defeated and imprisoned and was obliged to remark that "the subject and the master have changed places." This remark, as it stands, gives us a definite clue to the identification of this Bālāditya-rāja and leaves no room for doubt that the same person who was his vassal, was now, by turn of events, his victor and master. Had it been some other Bālāditya, this remark would never have come from Mihirakula who was mortally distressed at his tragic discomfiture by one who was only the other day his subordinate and tributary. Moreover, in view of the great significance of this episode we can not postulate the existence of a 'Bālāditya' who finds no place in the imperial Gupta lineage and is almost an obscure figure and has no seals or epigraphs or coins to his credit. The identification with Bhānugupta is absurd for we do not know what happened to him after his defeat in the battle of Eraṇ. Whatever the fact, he was certainly not holding the throne of Magadha during this period. In view of this, we believe that the Bālāditya of Yuan Chwang was no other than Narasimhagupta Bālāditya who played both the vanquished and victor during this critical phase of struggle with Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, the father and the son.

Coming to the conquest of Magadha by Toramāṇa we find that it was probably a comparatively easy affair. Narasimhagupta nodoubt offered resistance but it was too feeble to arrest his onward march. He was defeated and forced to accept his vassalage. The episode took place immediately after the conquest of Mālwā, in c. 511–12 A. D. Besides arms,

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[1] *DKM*. pp. 80–92 fn. 8.

Toramāṇa also seems to have resorted to the master stroke of divide and rule policy. The internal dissensions in the royal family and rebellious tendencies of feudatories were naturally encouraged and exploited by him like shrewd statesman to facilitate his smooth run and to consolidate his power and influence in this newly conquered territory without much bloodshed and violence.[1]

In the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* we have an interesting passage which says : "One Pakārākhya or Prakārākhya, who was of refactory nature and whose conduct was throughout rebellious, had been imprisoned by Goparāja (probably the generalissimo of the empire who had fought against Toramāṇa and was subsequently killed in the battle), and for seventeen years continuously languished behind prison-bars. Now, in the hurly-burly of the Hūṇa invasion he was somehow released at Bhāgavatapura, and incognito of a trader, he entered Tīrtha with a merchant in the dead of night. As the next day dawned he was apprehended and Toramāṇa, with great perspicacity, returned him to Nandapura (Pāṭaliputra), and enthroned him as king of Magadha at Kāśī (Banaras)." [2]

The full name of the Gupta prince 'Pra' of the *Mañjuśrimūlākalpa,* described as son of Bhakārākhya (probably to be identified with Narasiṁhagupta), a descendant of Samudragupta, has rightly been restored by Jayaswal as Prakaṭāditya [3] who, when a boy, was imprisoned by Gopa, possibly with the connivance of Narasiṁhagupta himself or his chief queen, Sumitrādevī. We have also an inscription of Prakaṭāditya, known as the Sāranātha inscription,[1] which throws some light on his lineage. He is said to have belonged to a family in which *nṛpati* (king) Bālāditya was born, and Prakaṭāditya himself was son of another Bālāditya by his wife Dhavalā. Thus, it may be suggested that Prakaṭāditya (which seems to be an *āditya* title assumed by him as in the case of other Gupta rulers, *eg*., Kramāditya, Vikramāditya, Mahendrāditya, Prakāśāditya and Bālāditya etc.) was probably another son of Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya by his queen Dhavalā,[2] and was reduced to hard straits because of the intrigues of the chief queen who wanted to secure the interest of her own son for succession to the Gupta throne, though it is impossible to be positive about one or the other possibilities in the present state of our knowledge.[3]

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[1] S. Chattopādhyāya, *op. cit.* pp. 186–87.

[2] *IHI.*, p. 51 :

"तस्यापि सुतः प्रकाराख्यः प्राग्देशेष्वेव जायतः
दस वर्षाणि सप्त च बन्धनस्थमधिष्ठितम्
गोपाख्येन नृपतिना बद्धो मुक्तोऽसौ भगवाह्वये
ततौ च क्षत्रियः वालवणिजा त्र सहागतः
रात्रौ प्रविष्टवांस्तत्र राज्यन्ते च प्रपूजितः
मगधानां तदा राज्ये स्थापयामास तं शिशुम्"

[3] *IHI.*, p. 73.

But, there is no doubt that Toramāṇa had a strong hand in encouraging the different scions of the imperial family to embark on a career of adventurism and carve out independent principalities. It was in pursuance of this policy that Toramāṇa encouraged Vainyagupta against Narasiṁhagupta to become the ruler of the Eastern provinces of the Gupta empire (Gauḍa) and further installed Prakaṭāditya as king of Magadha at Kāśī,[4] while inciting Kṛṣṇagupta or his successor to gain some influence in Magadha proper, probably to offset the rebellious activities of Narasiṁhagupta who, despite his crushing defeat and subjugation, had not yet reconciled to his humiliating status and had continued sneaking hostility towards his conqueror. Toramāṇa was too quick to grasp the deteriorating situation which, if allowed to develop further, would have dangerously effected his authority and prestige in Magadha. He was, therefore, determined to wreck vengeance on his Magadha vassal by completely shattering his power and status and compelling him to go into wilderness. As a result of this new move on his part Narasiṁhagupta had to flee from Magadha and live in exile for some years, *i.e.*, till the death of Toramāṇa in c. 515 A. D. It was in these unfortunate days that some of his baser coins belonging to class II type were issued.

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[1] *CII*., iii, No. 29, p. 284.

[2] *DKM*, p. 93 ff.

[3] According to some scholars, the Bhakārākhya of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* is to be identified with Bhānugupta, and Gopa with king Gopacandra who helped Narasiṁhagupta against Vainyagupta, and after the overthrow of the latter, made himself master of western and eastern Bengal. But these suggestions are not convincing in view of the flimsy and doubtful nature of the epigraphic and numismatic evidences, and it is difficult to be positive about the chronological order and identifications of the later Guptas in our present state of knowledge. For details see *DKM*., p. 94 fn. 1, 2 & 4; *EHI*, p. 201; Chattopādhyāya, *op. cit*., p. 183 ff.; *VGA*, p. 190 ff; *PHAI*., p. 503 ff.

[4] The Sāranātha inscription further shows that besides Magadha, Kāśī and Madhyadeśa were also under him and he was crowned at Kāśī.

The distribution of political patronage by Toramāṇa unmistakably points to his great influence in practically the whole of north-eastern India whose kings now sought his help and patronage to stabilise their status in their newly acquired principalities. The discomfiture of the Gupta monarch had nodoubt tremendously augmented his authority and made him the real arbiter of the destiny of many a king in this part of the country. It was probably a part of this diplomacy that he accepted Harivarman or Harigupta, a scion of the Gupta family turned a Jaina monk, as his preceptor in order to win over the sympathy of the followers of this sect in Magadha as we learn from the *Kuvalayamālā*. He also showed toleration towards other religious sects by distributing patronage, obviously for political expediency, which greatly increased his influence and popularity with the general mass who accepted him as their master and benefactor, and turned away from their erstwhile masters whose mutual feuds and bickerings had shaken their confidence, producing demoralising effect throughout the empire.

The above survey shows that Toramāṇa was a great conqueror, greater than Alexander and Menander in many respects. By his policy of conquest and aggrandisement he conquered practically the whole of northern India and a good portion of Eastern India and made it possible for the Hūṇas to dominate the political scene for about a quarter of a century. His invasion and subsequent conquest of Magadha was an event of profound importance in the history of northern India as it changed the course of contemporary history and let loose the forces of disintegration dealing a fatal blow to the prestige of the Gupta empire by directly as well as indirectly encouraging centrifugal tendencies all around to assert themselves with success. Even the Maitrakas of Valabhī after Droṇa Siṁha, who had been loyal to the Gupta rulers all through the years of stress and strain, assumed more high sounding titles like *mahāsāmanta*, *mahāpratihāra*, *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* and *mahākartakṛtika*, [1] suggesting definite improvement in their status and the further loosening of the tie with the imperial dynasty.

But, unfortunately for the Hūṇas, Toramāṇa could not survive long after his victorious march to Gauḍa and Magadha. He died immediately after this event. From the *Mañjuśrimūlakalpa* we learn that the powerful Śūdra king, Toramāṇa, after the installation of Prakaṭāditya in Kāśī, fell ill suddenly and expired. In his last moment he summoned his son, Graha (Mihirakula) to his bedside and crowned him as his successor [2] in c. 515 A. D.

A great conqueror, Toramāṇa was undisputedly a very wise ruler and shrewd statesman who had revived the lost fortunes of the Hūṇas, built up a vast empire from Central Asia to Pāṭaliputra through his prowess, foresight, cool-mindedness, diplomacy and conciliatory attitude. He made no change in the existing administrative pattern and disturbed none unnecessarily. He enticed officers like Dhanyaviṣṇu and left intact not only the old system of provincial administration but also the ancient official families. This foresight on his part naturally facilitated his smooth run in his newly conquered territories without causing bitterness among the ruling families of the day. His conquest of a considerable portion of India within a short time was rather phenomenal, having few parallels in the history of the world. It was a wonderful feat which even Aśoka and Samudragupta would have just envied. He remained tolerant in religious and other matters and stabilised his administration, issued coins and accelerated the pace of the disintegration of the Gupta empire. All that was now left of the empire was a carcass which was soon devoured by political vultures who are always on the look-out to avail of such opportunities. Toramāṇa retired but the glories of the Guptas never returned, and the following century saw their final exit from the stage of history. The political stability of the country was shattered beyond repair and from 550 A. D. onward Indian history loses a common string of national and common life. True, the Hūṇas also quit the political scene by this time, but the old life refused to return.

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[1] *JBBRAS*. (*N. S.*), i, p. 16 ; *IHQ*. iv, p. 462.

[2] *IHI*. pp. 64–65.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD PHASE

MIHIRAKULA

Mihirakula (c. 515–550 A. D.), aptly described as the "Attila of India" and "a veritable god of destruction" [1] succeeded his great father in c. 515 A. D. as is clear from his Gwalior inscription, [2] engraved in his fifteenth regnal year. Although an indomitable warrior, he lacked all those great qualities that make a great conqueror an ideal ruler. A born tyrant and blood-thirsty despot, he, by his policy of ruthless persecution and barbarous atrocities, destroyed the very edifice on which his father had built up the vast empire. Cruel and vindictive, he continually abode with his troops and spared none that came in his way. His was a reign of terror in which there was no place for mercy and justice, no consideration for humanitarianism. He trusted none but his sword and understood nothing but the language of violence and force. In other words, he imbibed all the ferocious traits of his race and caused the precipitous fall of the new Hūṇa empire much sooner than expected by his inordinate pride and wreckless adventures. It was an irony of fate that he fell a prisoner into the hands of those who had meekly submitted to his father. History has perhaps a few parallels to record.

Mihirakula established his capital at Śākala (modern Sialkot in the Punjab) which was once the headquarters of the Indo-Greek monarchs. At the time of his accession to the throne the Hūṇa kingdom extended from Balkh to central and nothern India atleast up to Kauśāmbī. [3]

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[1] Kalhaṇa, *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, i, 306–07.

[2] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 400 ff ; Fleet, *IA*, xv, p. 252; Stein, *IA*, 1905, p. 82.

[3] According to Chavannes, his kingdom extended from Balkh to Central India only (*op. cit.*, pp. 223–25, 235 n) which is not correct as we have shown above.

His real name was 'Mihiragula', which is also found on his Standing king type and Sassanian bust type coins as well as in his inscriptions from central Afghanistan, meaning *sun-flower*, whereas 'Mihirakula' means *the Solar race*. The term, *mihrkul*, which is used in the sense of a certain kind of cotton-cloth, actually does occur in the *Ain-i-Akbarī*.[1] This name was later on Sanskritised into 'Mihirakula' which is also mentioned by Yuan Chwang,[2] and the author of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*[3] as well as in the inscriptions of the period.

Fleet believed that the prefix *śrī* is always coupled with the *kula* form of the name, and the prefix *ṣāhī* with the *gula* form. But, from his copper coins it is clear that *śrī* is found associated with both forms of the name. The Sanskrit verb *jayatu* is coupled with the name *Mihirakula* on the silver coins. Smith suggests that probably the variation in spelling was regarded at the time as trival, though the *gula* form may be older than the *kula* form producing a legitimate Sanskrit compound, meaning 'the solar race' which is, of course, not suitable for the personal name. The wheel, or sun, the crescent moon and the trident are all found on the Gupta coins.[4]

Mihirakula is further identified with Gollas, the king of the White Hūṇas in India mentioned by Kosmos Indikopleustes (A. D. 522–530)[5] and with the unnamed Ephthalite king of Gandhāra visited by the Chinese envoy Sung-Yun in A. D. 520.[6] Smith identifies him with a person called Hunimanta; king of Persia, and ruler of Lahore and Multan, as stated by Tāranātha, the Buddhist historian.[7] This identification seems probable as Mihirakula was king of Lahore and Multan during this period but the statement of Tāranātha that he was king of Persia as well, is obviously incorrect and wide the mark. The reason for this inaccuracy and misstatement in Tāranātha's account is due to the fact that he wrote the history of the period based mostly on hearsay and legends, having sometimes no relation to historical facts. Moreover, the Kalkīrāja of the Jaina authors is no other than Mihirakula, 'the tyrant Hūṇa monarch.'[1]

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[1] Blochmann's *Trans.*, vol. i, pp. 95, 617.

[2] S. Beal, *Records of the Western World*, i, p. 167 ff.

[3] i, 306–07.

[4] *JASB*, 1894, p. 207 fn. 4.

[5] *Topographia Christiana of Kosmos*, quoted A. Stein, *IA.* xxxiv (1905), pp. 80–81.

[6] S. Beal, *op. cit.*, i, p. lxxiv ff; Chavannes. 'Voyage de Sung-Yun' in *BEFEO*, 1903 (trans.), p. 38 ff (of reprint).

[7] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 187.

Coming to the question of the regnal year of Mihirakula we find that it is as controversial as the personality of the monarch himself. Like Toramāṇa we have his only inscription in India proper—the Gwalior inscription which gives his regnal year as 15. We believe that the Gwalior inscription should be dated A. D. 530 as he succeeded his father in c. 515 A. D. This date is certainly approximately correct,[2] and convincingly corresponds to the reckoning of the White Hūṇa era, said to have commenced in A. D. 448. Pathak however, places his fifteenth regnal year in A. D. 517,[3] basing his arguments on the authority of the Jaina literature. We know that the accounts of Mihirakula's cruel deeds have been preserved to us in Jaina, Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical literature, According to the Jaina authorities, he was born on the first of the bright half of the month, Kārttika in Śaka 394 expired, the cyclic year being a Māgha-Saṁvatsara, corresponding to A. D. 472 and he died at the age of 70 in Śaka 464 or A. D. 542. Jinasena assigns to him a period of 42 years[4] while, according to Guṇabhadra and Nemicandra he ruled for 40 years only.[1]

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[1] K. B. Pathak, "New light on Gupta Era and Mihirakula" in *Bhandarkar Com. Vol.*, p. 195 ff; Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 207 fn. 3 & 4.

[2] Fleet, *IA*, xv, p. 252; Stein, *IA*, 1905, p. 82.

[3] For detailed discussion see K. B. Pathak, *op, cit.*, pp. 214-17.

[4] *Harivaṁśa*, chap. 60 :

"गुप्तानां च शतद्वयम् ।
एकत्रिंशच्च वर्षाणि कालविद्भिरुदाहृतम् ।"
"द्विचत्वारिंशदेवातः कल्किराजस्य राजता ।
ततोऽजितंजयो राजा स्यादिन्द्रपुरसंस्थितः ॥"
"वर्षाणां षट्शतीं त्यक्त्वा पंचाग्रांमासपंचकम् ।
मुक्तिंगते महावीरे शकराजस्ततोऽभवत् ॥"

On this analogy Pathak suggests that deducting 42 or 40 years from A. D. 542 (the year of Mihirakula's death on the authority of the Jaina scholars) we get A. D. 500 or A. D. 502, and accepting A. D. 502 as the initial year of Mihirakula's reign his fifteenth regnal year "*must be*" A. D. 517[2] (Gwalior inscription), while his father Toramāṇa's first year may safely be taken to be A. D. 500, coming after Gupta Saṁvat 180 or A. D. 499, the latest date for Budhagupta. And, "the figure 52 found on Toramāṇa's silver coins corresponds to A. D. 500, the initial year of his reign. If calculated backwards, the figure 52 brings us to A. D. 448 which is thus the exact date of the foundation of the Hūṇa empire in the Oxus basin."[3] Mihirakula has been mentioned by yet another Jaina writer Somadeva Sūri[4] (10th century A. D.), a contemporary of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇarāja III, but he gives neither the date of his birth nor the year of his death, as his predecessors have done. He further refers to a tradition which says that a Hūṇa king (obviously Mihirakula) had conquered Citrakūṭa which is to be identified with the famous Citrakūṭa, situated on the bank of the Mandākinī river, a revered place of pilgrimage of the Hindus. [1]

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[1] Guṇabhadra's *Uttara Purāṇa*, chap. 76 :

"चतुर्मुखाह्वयः कल्की राजोद्वेजितभूतलः ।
उपत्स्यते मघासंवत्सर योग समागमे ।। ३९६ ।।
समानां सप्ततिस्तस्य परमायुः प्रकीर्तितम् ।
चत्वारिंशत्समा राज्यस्थितिश्चाक्रमकारिणः" ।। ३९७ ।।

(This is just a prophecy put into the mouth of Gautama-Gaṇadhara).

Nemicandra's *Trilokasāra* :

"पण छ०सय व०सं पणमाससजुदं गमिय वीरणि० वुइदो ।
सगराजो सो कल्की चदुणवतियमहिय सगमासं ।। ८४० ।।
सो उ०म०गाहिमुहो चउ०मुहो सदरिवास परमाऊ ।
चालीस रज०ओ जिदभूमि पु०छइ स मंतिगणं ।। ८४१ ।।
अम्हाणं के अवसा णि०गंथा अ०थि केरिसायारा ।
णि०छणव०या भि०खाभोजी जहस०थमिदिवयणे ।। ८४२ ।।

(Extract from a *palm-leaf MS.*, p. 32, quoted K. B. Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 221).

[2] K. B. Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[4] *Nītivākyāmṛta* (Bomb. edn., p. 79) : "नामुद्रहस्तोऽशोधितो वा कश्चित्स्वमण्डलविषये प्रविशेन्नि (न्नि) र्गच्छेद्वा । श्रूयते हि किल हूणाधिपतिः पण्यपुटवाहिभिः सुभटैश्चित्रकूटं जग्राह ।"

The reconstruction of Mihirakula's date by Pathak is indeed refreshing and interesting but it suffers from two obvious contradictions. First, none of the Jaina authors on whose statement so much reliance has been placed, belonged to the period in which Mihirakula flourished. Jinasena composed the particular passage of his work under review in Śaka 705 (= A. D. 783) and died about Śaka 760, the latest date assigned to his unfinished work. [2] Guṇabhadra, his pupil, completed the unfinished work (the *Ādipurāṇa*) of his master only a few years later, [3] and then undertook to write his own portion of the *Mahāpurāṇa*. It is obvious, therefore, that he wrote shortly after Śaka 760 (838 A. D.) in the latter half of the ninth century A. D.

Nemicandra, the author of *Trilokasāra*, flourished during the time of Cāmuṇḍārāja (978 A. D.) whom we know from the concluding *praśasti* of his *Gomaṭasāra, karmakāṇḍa* (ninth chapter). This Cāmuṇḍārāja was the minister of king Rācamalladeva IV of the Gaṅga dynasty which was reigning in 977 A. D. [3] In other words, Nemicandra flourished in the later part of the tenth century A. D. Thus, all these Jaina writers flourished during the ninth and tenth centuries, *i.e.*, about three to four hundred years after the death of Mihirakula or the Kalkīrāja. Naturally, therefore, their account is based on hearsay and traditions rather than on solid facts of history. The Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist works are almost silent about his time and the Jaina works, prejudiced as they are, appear to paint only the dark side of the picture as it were with a vengeance. It is, therefore, risky to place absolute reliance on their statements.

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[1] It is also suggested that this Citrakūṭa is to be identified with Chittor in Rajputana (R. K. Choudhary, *op. cit.*, p. 118 fn. 37) which is not convincing for any reference to Citrakūṭa in our ancient literature is obviously to the centuries old famous place of pilgrimage on the bank of the Mandākinī in Central India (Cf. *Bhandarkar Com. Vol.* p. 216).

[2] *IA*, vol. xv, p. 143.

[3] K. B. Pathak, "Bhartṛhari and Kumārila" in *JBBRAS*, vol. xviii, p. 213.

[4] Cf. Śrāvaṇa Belgola inscriptions (ed. Rice), Intro, p. 34; Pathak, *Bhandarkar Com. Vol.* p. 197 ff.

The dates of Mihirakula's birth and death seem to be approximately correct but the duration of his reign-period as given by Jaina authors is not convincing for we know that he ruled for a comparatively longer period and his reign-period ended about 544–550 A. D. The fact is that he was defeated by Yaśodharman about A. D. 535, and was driven out of central India and compelled to retire to Kashmir and the neighbouring regions where he kept on fighting bloody wars for a long time. Pathak, following Drouin, Smith and others, has rightly suggested that the White Hūṇa era commenced in 448 A. D. and that the first regnal year of Toramāṇa falls in A. D. 500. As shown above the coins of Toramāṇa give three different dates—52 and 54 and also 58 on one of the coins of Īśānavarman in the same era [1] which give A. D. 500 and 502 and A. D. 506 for Toramāṇa and Īśānavarman respectively.

The coins of Mihirakula were issued only when he succeeded his father. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* cleary says that Toramāṇa died after his famous victory in the battle of the Eraṇ which was fought in 510 A. D. In view of these and other positive evidences we fail to understand how could Toramāṇa's first regnal year, *i.e.*, A. D. 500 and Mihirakula's first year *i.e.*, A. D. 502 (according to Pathak) be reconciled to give accurate date of the latter, because they are contradictory and fallacious. Toramāṇa died in 515 A. D., taking A. D. 500 to be his first regnal year which is convincingly proved, when he was succeeded by Mihirakula and the latter's fifteenth regnal year, as given in the Gwalior inscription, comes to c. A. D. 530, taking c. 515 A. D. to be the year of his succession to the Hūṇa throne. This was the very period during which Kosmos Indikopleustes found northern India under White Hūṇa domination. We can, therefore, conclude with certainty that Mihirakula is identical with the Hūṇa king of Kosmos. The inscription at Gwalior, which mentions Mihirakula as being overlord of the kingdom, was, in all probability, executed either in 530 A. D. or a year or two previously.[1] Any other possibility in the present state of our knowledge is completely ruled out as it goes against established facts of contemporary history. It was a few years after the installation of the Gwalior inscription that Mihirakula was first defeated by Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya and then by Yaśodharman when he fully lost control of his northern and north-western kingdoms and retired to Kashmir to spend the last days of his tragic career in agony and frustration.

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[1] V. A. Smith, "The Indian Coinage of the Ephthalite or White Hūṇas and the Gupta silver coins" in *JASB*, 1894, pp. 188–94.

WARS AND CONQUESTS

"The disposition of this king was cruel and vindictive and he practised the most barbarous atrocities...... Entirely self-reliant on his own strength, he had entered on a war with the country of Ki-pin (Kashmir)...... and his troops had been engaged in it for three years. This king has 700 war-elephants... The king continually abode with his troops on the frontier and never returned to his kingdom, in consequence of which the old men had to labour and the common people were oppressed."[2]

—From Sung-Yun's account.

The above description given by a contemporary Chinese traveller (520 A. D.) aptly portrays the man and conqueror that Mihirakula was. He had inherited the fighting skill of his father and the ferocious traits of his race that rightly place him in the hierarchy of great generals turned unscruplous tyrants. He was born and brought up in the midst of wars and had seen and enjoyed its horrors with the countenance of a philosopher. Violence as such flowed through his veins and tyranny boomed in his heart. A most dreaded and hated general, he was the talk of ordinary soldiers, kings and chieftains as well as the commonfolk. But, as a soldier he ultimately proved a failure, as a ruler a greater failure and as a statesman a still greater failure. His greatest tragedy was that the Hūṇa revival in India which began with his great father, almost ended with his death. His name means "Sun-flower" but never was an unlucky general and monarch more miscalled.

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[1] A. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 82 ff.

[2] Chavannes, *BEFEO*, 1903; Beal, *Records*, vol. i, p. lxxiv ff.

Fortunately for us we have a number of records relating to his wars and conquests, varied in nature and diverse in character. These speak of his stormy career as a general, of his many ups and downs as an administrator and of his gloomy end as a monarch. They further highlight his ferocious temper and insatiable lust for depradations and bloodsheds and his desperate struggle for bare existence towards the end of his life inspite of the fact that he had inherited a vast empire from his father. Indeed, he presents the sad spectacle of a monarch who hastened his untimely fall through his own precipitous actions and foolish policy.

We have the following accounts which throw light on his activities :

(i) The epigraphic records are few in number, though they are of great importance. The Gwalior inscription of the year 15 is so far the only inscription found in India proper and there are two small undated inscriptions from Uruzgan in central Afghanistan. Palaeographically they may be assigned c. 500–515 A. D. Besides these, he also finds prominent mention in the Mandasor stone-pillar inscription of Yaśodharman in which the latter claims to have inflicted a crushing defeat on the former.

(ii) We have both silver and copper coins of Mihirakula. His silver coins are exceedingly rare and include only the Sassanian bust type whereas his copper coins are copious and are known in several sizes and types, *i.e.*, the Horseman type, the Standing king type and the Sassanian bust type.

The coins of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula are not certainly known in gold, though "it is probable that many of the rude imitations of the Gupta gold Archer coins are of White Hūṇā origin."[1] The silver coins follow Persian and Parthian models; the copper pieces are mainly Indian; and the gold (if any gold coins are Hūṇa issues) copy the Gupta coinage which may be concisely characterized as Indo-Roman.[2] These coins have been found in large numbers in Kashmir, the Punjab, the neighbourhood of Rawalpindi, Rajputana and a portion of Central India. Recently nine copper coins (six of Toramāṇa and three of Mihirakula) have been collected from Sanghol in the Eastern Punjab, which is an ancient historical site.[3]

(iii) The account of Sung-Yun, the Chinese traveller who visited Gandhāra in 520 A. D. is very important as it gives a vivid description of the activities of this monarch in Gandhāra and adjoining tracts. The account is in Chinese and some brief details are furnished to us by the Chinese sources.[4] Moreover, portions of this account survive in the quotations of the later writers, and his account of Oḍḍiyāna and Gandhāra has been translated by Chavannes[5] and others.[6] From these accounts we have some very important information supporting and corroborating other evidences from different sources.

(iv) The most trustworthy piece of information previously available was perhaps furnished by a passage in the *Topographia Christiana* of Kosmos, an Alexandrian merchant who visited the western ports of India in about 530 A. D. and by his journey won the appellation of Indikopleustes. The notice of this curious old author, who later became a monk, is important as it tells us that in his time the White Hūṇas were

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1. V. A. Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 187–88.
2. *Ibid*, p. 188 fn. 2.
3. *JNSI*, 1962, pp. 41–44.
4. Bagchi, *India and China*, p. 74.
5. *BEFEO*, 1903.
6. S. Beal, *op. cit.* vol. i, p. lxxix ff. etc.

in possession of the north of India. Their king was called Gollas "who marched to war with two thousand elephants and numberless cavalry." His word was law to 'the whole of India' and he levied tribute on distant lands. [1] Kosmos' Hūṇa king has now been identified with the ruler known to us as Mihirakula in Indian tradition. The account enables us to form a clear idea of the important part played by the White Hūṇas in India. We owe this result to recently discovered Indian inscriptions which have now made it possible to fix with certainty the time and nationality of Mihirakula.

(v) The fullest account of Mihirakula, so far, is supplied to us by the Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chwang who visited the Buddhist sanctuaries of India during the second quarter of the seventh century. In the record of his travels, the *Si-yu-ki*, he has left us a rich store-house of important information on Indian history and antiquities. His lengthy story about Mihirakula, though founded on popular tradition of Buddhist complexion, gives us the following main points [2] :

(a) Mihirakula lived "some centuries" before the rise of Yuan Chwang and had his capital at Sākala, the modern Sialkot, and was lord of a considerable portion of India.

(b) When Bālāditya-rāja, king of Magadha, "heard of the cruel persecution and atrocities of Mihirakula, he strictly guarded the frontiers of his kingdom and refused to pay tribute. This infuriated him so much that he left the charge of his kingdom to his younger brother and marched against Bālāditya but was thoroughly defeated and taken prisoner. He was, however, released later at the intervention of Bālāditya's mother.

(c) In the meantime his brother, taking advantage of his absence and discomfiture, had usurped the throne which compelled him to seek asylum in Kashmir. Sometime after he killed his host, the king of Kashmir, and "placed himself on the throne."

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[1] A Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 80–81.

[2] *Si-yu-ki* or *Memories sur les Contre'es Occidentales*, trans. Stan. Julien, i, p. 190 ff.

(d) He then killed the king of Gandhāra, overthrew the stūpas and destroyed the *saṁghārāmas,* "altogether one thousand six hundred foundations" and had nine hundred thousand men slain or sold in to slavery on the banks of the Indus.

(e) He died within a year amid various manifestations of the divine wrath.

(vi) The *Pādatāditakam* of Śyāmalika, a Sanskrit work composed in Gupta times, also gives some interesting information regarding the activities of the Hūṇas under Mihirakula in Pāṭaliputra and the adjoining tracts. The description shows that the Hūṇas had struck terror into the hearts of ordinary citizens who became afraid at the very sight of a man, simply dressed in the Hūṇa garments. It further gives us an idea of their usual ornaments and dress [1] as well as their social customs.

(vii) The *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* also furnishes us with a vivid description of the activities of Mihirakula, called *makārākhya.* It speaks of his eastern campaigns and of his brave, warlike and ferocious nature and his insatiable ambitions as well as idiosyncracies bordering on lunacy. [2]

(viii) The Jaina sources also throw some interesting light on the date and activities of Mihirakula who is said to have persecuted the Jaina community of Nirgranthas. There are four important passages in Jaina literature. The first passage [3] is one in which Jinasena (latter half of the ninth century) says that he wrote in Śaka 705. In the second passage [4] he says that the Guptas reigned 231 years and were succeeded by Kalkīrāja who reigned 42 years and his successor was

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[1] *Pādatāditakam* in *Caturbhāṇī*, ed. V. S. Agrawal and Moticandra.

[2] *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* : "प्रमादी कामचारी च स राजागृहचिह्नितः" (*IHI*).

[3] *IA*, xv, p. 103.

[4] *Ibid.*

Ajitañjaya. In the third passage[5] Jinasena's pupil Guṇabhadra (898 A. D.) says that Kalkīrāja was the father and predecessor of Ajitañjaya, that he was a great tyrant who oppressed the world and persecuted the Nirgranthas and that he reigned 40 years and died at the age of 70. He also gives the date of his birth. The fourth passage[6] which is an illuminating commentary on the second and third passages is found in the *Trilokasāra* in which the author, Nemicandra (978 A. D.) reproduces these details of the story of Kalkīrāja and adds that the Hūṇa king was born when six hundred and five years and five months had passed by from the nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra, and that king Kalkīrāja was born when three hundred and ninety-four years and seven months had gone by from the rise of the Śaka king, *i.e.*, when three hundred and ninety-four Śaka years and seven months had elapsed. Besides these, Somadeva,[7] another Jaina author, alludes to his victorious march as far as Citrakūṭa, referred to in the preceding pages.

But all told, the fact remains that the Jaina and Buddhist works always present a prejudiced picture of Mihirakula as he is alleged to have oppressed the followers of both communities. Nonetheless, we have some valuable information in these accounts that throw refreshing light on the contemporary history.

(ix) Inspite of its legendary details, Yuan Chwang's story rests on historical foundations as we can clearly see from Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, the Sanskrit chronicle of Kashmir. Here in Mihirakula figures as a potent ruler of Kashmir, though in a chronological order which is wholly erroneous. It also tells of his victorious campaigns extending over all India and Ceylon. Besides, of his brave and pitiless nature (comparable to "the god of destruction") we receive legendary details which quite tally with the descriptions of the Chinese traveller and the *Āryaśrīmañjumūlakalpa,* serving as an important corroborative source of his history.

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[5] Pathak, *Bhandarkar Com. Vol.* pp. 195, 219-20.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Nītivākyāmṛta*, Bomb. edn. p. 79.

(x) And, finally, the recent discovery of a seal of Mihirakula from Kauśāmbī,[1] like that of his father Toramāṇa, supports Yuan Chwang's account and confirms his military conquest and domination of the areas up to Kauśāmbī in northern India.

These accounts are quite incoherent and diverse in nature ranging from the first half of the sixth century to the middle of the tenth century A. D. Some of these are eye-witness accounts while others are often based on hearsay and traditions. In some of these, personal and religious prejudices find full play colouring the vision of the narrators and thus making it impossible for the readers to place their full reliance upon their narratives. The accounts, though contemporary, are not objective and sharply conflict with epigraphic and numismatic evidences which are otherwise unimpeachable. For instance, the accounts of the Chinese travellers depict him as a ruthless persecutor of the Buddhists and worshipper of demons whereas his coins and inscription definitely point to the contrary and leave no doubt that he was a great devotee of Lord Śiva. Though these discrepancies are there, however, we get by the process of elimination and co-relation, a clear picture of his wars and conquests which mark him out as a man of destiny who rode roughshod over the high tide of victories and defeats and ultimately fell a tragic victim to his own ruthless manners and mad adventures.

THE REIGN OF TERROR

Mihirakula's accession to the Hūṇa throne was quite smooth and uneventful. The *Āryaśrīmañjumūlakalpa* informs us that Toramāṇa suddenly fell ill at Kāśī, called his son to his bedside, crowned him as his successor and expired. Mihirakula was probably in charge of the administration of the north-western and central provinces of the Hūṇa kingdom when his father was busy with the conquest and consolidation of the northern and north-eastern territories. Providence suddenly called upon him to undertake the responsibilities of a vast empire—vaster than any that ever a Hūṇa king was required to administer in the past. Young and rash, he was temperamentally unsuited to the enormous task and failed to rise to the occasion. He was fortunate to have inherited a peaceful empire through the genius of his father, but by his unwise policy and wreckless actions he transformed it in to a veritable ferment, giving rise to chaos and disorder all around. In order to suppress the rebellious activities of the insurgent chiefs he chased them ceaselessly like a mad general and subjected the innocent subjects to terrible persecutions, but with no substantial gain. On the other hand, he lost the peace of his empire as well as that of his mind resulting in the slow but steady decline in the fortunes of the Hūṇa empire.

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[1] The information is given by S. Chattopādhyāya in his *Early History of North India,* p. 197, but we have no such reference to his seal in the *Excavations at Kauśāmbī* (1957–59) by G. R. Sharma who, however, gives detailed description of the two seals of Toramāṇa.

The epigraphic and numismatic evidences emphatically confirm his hold over Afghanistan, Gandhāra, Kashmir, Punjab, Sind, Rajputana and areas up to Central India. We have so far only his three inscriptions—two from Uruzgan in Central Afghanistan and one from Gwalior in Central India. Of these the former two [1] are earlier and the latter [2] much later. The Uruzgan inscriptions are dated c. 500–515 A. D. and confirm the occupation of Zabulistan by the Hūṇas under Toramāṇa and Mihirakula. They were probably engraved when Mihirakula was governor of these provinces while his father, the monarch, was busy with his Indian conquests. They are in Hephthalite script and the second appears to be identical with the first but for the omission of certain letters. The reading and interpretation of these inscriptions are as follows :

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[1] Cf. "The Inscriptions of Uruzgan" by A. D. H. Bivar in *JRAS*, 1954, p. 112 ff.

[2] Cf. "The Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula" by R. L. Mitra, *JASB*. xxxi, p. 391 ff; Fleet, *CII*. iii, p. 162 ff; Bhandarkar, *List*, No. 2109; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, i, p. 400 ff.

Bo(g)o Ssaho Zovolovo Mihroziki (the divine and glorious king of Zabul, Mihira (kula)).

The presence of these inscriptions as well as an Arabic inscription on tracks which converge in the plain of Uruzgan indicates that the region was important in the kingdom of Zabul. It is true, there are no considerable ancient buildings in the plain of Uruzgan, but the place may easily have been the site of the royal camp which must have been the headquarters of the nomadic Hephthalites. The purpose of the inscriptions would have been to inform the travellers proceeding along these tracks of the name of the ruler at whose camp they would shortly arrive. It is possible that many more similar inscriptions exist near the many other caravan routes which meet at Uruzgan. [1]

After a long gap we have a third inscription—the Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula inscribed in the fifteenth regnal year (A. D. 530). It was found built into the wall in the porch of a temple of the sun, in fortress at Gwalior. He is described as being the son of Toramāṇa, "a ruler of great merit" and "of him, the fame of whose family risen high, the son (is) he, of unequal prowess, the lord of the earth, who is renowned under the name of Mihirakula (and) who (himself) unbroken, (broken the power of) Paśupati" [2] (or, "who was unbroken in the matter of worshipping" the God Paśupati). [3] These inscriptions thus confirm his unquestioned sovereignty over the territories from Afghanistan to Central India in 530 A. D. and mark the first phase of his career as a conqueror when he enjoyed supreme power and glory.

The epigraphic evidence is supported by his numerous coinage found in these regions. A large number of his copper coins of Sassanian type found at Chiniot and Shahkot,[1] Kashmir, the eastern and western Punjab, Rajputana, Gandhāra, Taxila (Takṣaśilā) and other places[2] speak of his undisputed rule over a vast kingdom. Besides these, some small size anonymous Indo-Sassanian coins found at Bhitarī between Ghazipur and Banaras may be ascribed to this Hūṇa monarch or to his father. Some coins obtained at that place by Cunningham were assigned by him to the eighth or ninth century,[3] but they appear to be earlier.[4] Similar coins have also been discovered at Indor Kherā in the Bulandshahr district, usually associated with ruins of the Gupta period,[5] and a crude reminiscence of this Sassanian reverse device is also found as late as A. D. 900 on the coins of Vigrahapāla of Magadh.[6] We are not very certain about the ascription of these coins either to Toramāṇa or Mihirakula, but the seals of the two monarchs found in Kauśāmbī excavations, noted earlier, seem to indirectly confirm their presence and circulation in these areas. It can not be doubted, however, that their political hold and influence extended over Kauśāmbī, Banaras as far as Magadha and the adjoining tracts which is unmistakably vouchsafed partly by literary accounts and partly by archaeological evidences.

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[1] A. D. H. Bivar, *op. cit.* pp. 117–18.

[2] Fleet, *CII*. iii, p. 163.

[3] Bhandarkar's interpretation. D. C. Sircar does not accept his reading as "भेजे." The relevant verse reads as follows : "तस्यो (तोरमाणस्यो)-दित-कुल-कीर्त्तेः पुत्रो (ऽ) तुलविक्रमः पतिः पृथ्व्याः मिहिरकुलेतिख्यातो (ऽ) भग्नो यः पशुपतिम्......" (*op. cit.*, p. 401).

The reign-period of Mihirakula from A. D. 515 to A. D. 530 may be described as the period of his efflorescence, supreme power and glory. The edifice built by the father was further cemented by the conquering son who came to be regarded as the most dreaded monarch throughout the country. The mere mention of his name was enough to cause consternation among the Indian chiefs and potentates who shuddered at the very prospect of meeting the Hūṇa monarch, for his physical presence virtually signalled death, devastation and carnage. In other words, he established a reign of terror and mercilessly swooped down upon the erring chiefs at the slightest provocation. And, for fifteen years the rule of blood and iron had a free play and the soul of the nation was crushed.

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[1] *JASB*, 1894, pt. ii, p. 73 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 203 ff; *JNSI*, 1962, p. 41 ff.

[3] *Arch. Rep.* i, p. 97.

[4] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 192.

[5] *Arch. Rep.*, xii, pp. 44, 68.

[6] *Ibid.*, xi, pp. 175, 181, Pl. xliii; also cf. *Coins of Mediaeval India*, pp. 49–52.

Contemporary records throw considerable light on the activities of this monarch as well as the state of affairs obtaining in this country during this period. We are fortunate in having accounts left by Sung-Yun, Kosmos Indikopleustes and Yuan Chwang. Of these the former two visited some parts of the country when Mihirakula was ruling and the latter came to India a century after. The Chinese sources give us the following details regarding the visit of Sung-Yun :

"Towards the beginning of the sixth century A. D. (A. D. 518) an Empress of the Wei dynasty sent an official mission to India to offer presents to the Buddhist sanctuaries and bring back Buddhist texts from India. The official envoy was one Song-Yun...... his companions followed the southern route of Central Asia—Shen shen (near Lobnor), Tso-mo (Chalmadana, modern Cherchen) and Khotan...... to Karghalik, Wakhan and Chitral......, the valleys of Yasin and Gilgit... and Bolar to the north-west of Kashmir. The visit of Song-Yun was restricted to north-west of India, especially to Uḍḍiyāna (the Swat Valley) and Gandhāra (Peshawar). Song-Yun returned to China in A. D. 522 and compiled an account of his journey which is now lost." [1]

But the portions of his account survive in the fragmentary quotations by later writers, and his account of Uḍḍiyāna or Oḍḍiyāna has been translated by Chavannes [2] and others. [3] The story of Gandhāra is specially interesting as it is an eye-witness account that portrays the various facets of the monarch's chequered career. Sung-Yun entered the kingdom of Gandhāra during the middle decade of the fourth month

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1. P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*, p. 74.

2. *BEFEO*, 1903.

3. S. Beal, *Records of the Western World*, vol. i, p. lxxiv ff.

of the first year of Ching-kwong (A. D. 520). The country was formerly called the country of Ye-po-lo which was destroyed by the Ye-thas who set up a *tegin* to rule over the country "since which events two generations have passed." The disposition of this king was cruel and vindictive and he practised the most barbarous atrocities, and "did not believe the Law of the Buddha but loved to worship demons...... Entirely self-reliant on his own strength, he had entered on a war with the country of Ki-pin (Kashmir), disputing the boundaries of their kingdom and his troops had already been engaged in it for three years." The king had 700 war-elephants and he "continually abode with his troops on the frontier and never returned to his kingdom, in consequence of which the old men had to labour and the common people were oppressed." [1]

Thus, from the above account we have the following information :

(a) The Ephthalites or the Ye-thas conquered Gandhāra and the adjoining areas and set up a viceroy there about two generations before c. 520 A. D. This event naturally occurred either after c. 500 A. D. or a few years earlier when Toramāṇa was the leader of the Hūṇas in the capacity of a *tegin* or viceroy.

(b) Mihirakula was a non-Buddhist and had been waging wars against the kingdom of Kashmir for three years which continued even at the time of Sung-Yun's visit, *i.e.*, c. 520 A. D.

(c) The capital-seat of Mihirakula was Gandhāra, *i.e.*, to the west of the Indus.

Kosmos, who visited western ports of India in c. 530 A. D. says in his *Topographia Christiana* that in his time the White Hūṇas were in possession of the north of India and at their head was king Gollas (Mihirakula) "who marched to war with two thousand elephants and numberless cavalry." [2] His word was law to the whole of India, and he levied tribute on distant lands.

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[1] *Ibid*, i, p. lxxiv ff; *Infra*, p. 113.

[2] Quoted M. A. Stein, *op. cit.* p. 80; also cf. V. de St. Martin, *Les Ephthalites* (Paris, 1849), p. 52 ff; M. Specht, "Etudes sur l'Aise Centrale," *Journal Asiatique*, 1883, pp. 320 ff, 355 ff.

Kosmos further narrates a story current among the people which says that at one time when the Hūṇa king was besieging a city situated in Central India, he was unable to take it on account of the moats full of water by which it was protected. Thereupon he made his elephants, horses and myriads of soldiers drink the moat dry during the protracted siege so that he was able to march dry-foot in to the town.[1]

The main points in the account of Kosmos may be summarised as follows :

(a) The White Hūṇas under Mihirakula were in possession of the north of India in c. 530 A. D., *i e.,* only ten years after Sung-Yun's visit.

(b) His word was law to the whole of India and he levied tribute on distant lands. Evidently by 'the whole of India' he meant North India from which he exacted taxes. This shows that he was a downright tyrant who brooked no offence.

(c) He besieged a city in central India and ultimately conquered it. In other words, he held possession of central India—a fact which is fully supported by his Gwalior inscription.

Yuan Chwang, however, gives us a greater detail in the record of his travels, the *Si-yu-ki* (643 A. D.). From his lengthy story concerning Mihirakula, founded on popular tradition of Buddhist complexion, we gather the following points :

(a) A long time before the journey of Yuan Chwang ("some centuries before") Mihirakula was the powerful king of Sākala (now identified with Sialkot), the ancient capital of the Punjab.

(b) He reduced the neighbouring princes through his bravery and cleverness and in the end he acquired supremacy over the "Five Indies."

(c) His persecution of the Buddhists and other cruel acts goaded Bālāditya, one of the rulers of Eastern India (obviously Magadha), into insurrection and he "strictly guarded the frontiers of his kingdom and *refused to pay tribute.*" This infuriated Mihirakula so much that, leaving the charge of his kingdom to his brother, he atonce marched at the head of a mighty host against the rebel who was compelled to retire into a marshy tract, but later he lured his adversary into an ambuscade, defeated him and took him prisoner. The intervention of his mother induced Bālāditya to spare the young king's life and afterwards he even set him at liberty.

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[1] *Ibid.*

(d) After this humiliation he returned to his capital, but there he found his throne usurped by his younger brother and was thus reduced to a wandering existence. He sought refuge in Kashmir and, after some time, succeeded by intrigue in killing the king of Kashmir and obtaining the sceptre himself. From his newly won dominions he then marched victoriously westward to the Indus.

(e) In his westward march he killed the king of Gandhāra, razed sixteen hundred Buddhist monasteries to the ground in those parts and had nine hundred thousand men slain or sold into slavery on the banks of the Indus.

(f) Shortly afterwards, probably within a year, he died amid various manifestations of the divine wrath. [1]

The above accounts from three different sources give us a vivid picture of the man, administrator and general that Mihirakula was. Of these accounts, that of Yuan Chwang has been subjected to severe criticisms by scholars. Watters points out that other Chinese authorities also place Mihirakula long before that date. Naturally scholars have expressed grave doubts on the credibility of his story relating to him. Chronologically, the account of Kalhaṇa, too, is hardly compatible with the historically established narratives of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula. Pannalāl totally rejects the contention of the Chinese pilgrim about the Hūṇas but Fleet, and following him,

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[1] *Si-yu-ki*, trans. Stan. Julien, vol. i, p. 190 ff; Beal, *Records*, i, p. 167 ff.

Smith and others, believe that there is some error in the Chinese text itself. K. B. Pathak, on the basis of some later Jaina texts, inscriptions and coins, rejects his version as baseless.[1] There is nodoubt that Yuan Chwang's story is not above board, for he does not say any thing about Yaśodharman and the crushing victory of Mihirakula by him. The simple fact is that the Buddhist bias of the pilgrim, like all sectarian preachers, greatly effected and distorted his general view of men and affairs, making such accounts sometimes exaggerated, and often wholly untenable.

Thus, it is true that he wrongly places him "some centuries" before his time (he really came to India a century after), but the legendary details given by him quite tally with the description we have in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* which speaks of his victorious campaigns extending over all India, of his being a potent ruler of Kashmir and of his brave but pitiless nature. Chronological errors apart, the Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist sources surprisingly corroborate and support each other which get further confirmation from numismatic and epigraphic sources.

The Buddhist accounts, too, are of conflicting nature and there are some glaring discrepancies in the story of Yuan Chwang as compared to that of Sung-Yun. According to the latter, Mihirakula was pre-eminently the king of Gandhāra (A. D. 520), while according to the former, his capital was at Śākala and he was the lord of practically the whole of north India including Magadha or "Five Indies," which has been explained as comprising Surāṣṭra or the Punjab (probably both the eastern and western parts of the Punjab in this case), Kānyakubja or Kanauj, Mithilā or Bihar, Gauḍa or Bengal and Utkala or Orissa.[2] This statement of the Chinese traveller, based on legendary accounts, is partly correct and partly exaggerated. It has been shown above that Mihirakula had undisputed sway over Gandhāra, the Punjab and the whole of North-western frontier provinces. Besides, he also exercised his sway over the Kanauj region as the Kauśāmbī seals definitely suggest: Gauḍa or North Bengal and Magadh formed vassal states of the Hūṇas under his father and also during the early years of his reign, although towards the later part, these states revolted against his authority, defeated and humiliated him and finally broke away. Infact, Mihirakula lost his authority and influence in this part of the country for ever. But, he never advanced as far as Orissa and Mithilā as we shall see later.

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[1] *IA.* xi (1918), vii ; *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, i, pp. 289–325.

[2] Havell, *Aryan Rule in India*, p. 191, note 1 ; D. C. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 385 ; Smith, *Early History of India* (3rd edn.), p. 353; Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 119.

The account of Kosmos (530 A. D.) throws some refreshing light on this point: "Higher up in India, that is farther to the north, are the White Huṇas. The one called Gollas when going to war takes with him, it is said, no fewer than two thousand elephants and a great force of cavalry. He is the lord of India, and oppressing the people......forces them to pay tribute...... The river Phison (Indus) separates all the countries of India from the country of the Huns." [1]

The above accounts make an interesting reading. According to Sung-Yun, the Hūṇa kingdom proper was confined to Gandhāra only, *i.e.*, to the west of the Indus, while Yuan Chwang (643 A. D.) makes him lord of a considerable portion of India. Kosmos (530 A. D.), on the other hand, strikes a reconciliating balance between the two opposite views and makes it clear that Mihirakula was in possession of north India in 530 A. D., *i.e.*, only ten years after Sung-Yun's visit, and his word was law to "the whole of India," evidently north India. He also held possession of Central India which is mentioned by Kosmos and further supported by his own Gwalior inscription of c. 530 A. D.

Thus, the real extension of the Ephthalite power was evidently effected after c. 520 A. D. though Mihirakula's suzerainty was nominally acknowledged by the kings of

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2. Quoted S. Chattopādhyāya, *op. cit.* p. 197.

those provinces of which Sung-Yun seems to have had no knowledge at all. The Chinese sources also make it abundantly clear that Sung-Yun's visit was restricted to north-west of India, specially to Uḍḍiyāna (the Swat Valley) and Gandhāra (the Peshawar region) and he returned to China in 522 A. D. On the other hand, Kosmos had an advantage over Sung-Yun in as much as he visited the western parts of India ten years after the latter's visit, when the power and prestige of Mihirakula was unquestionably supreme throughout north-eastern and central India. The Betul plates of A. D. 518 refer to the Gupta rule which suggests that by this time atleast the Gupta paramountcy was accepted in the area and as such the conquest of Mihirakula would have taken place only after this date.

Yuan Chwang visited India a century after Sung-Yun and Kosmos when the Hūṇas were no more on the political scene as an effective power, but the legends about Mihirakula's many-sided activities and personal traits were current and, in popular parlance, he passed for a dreaded tyrant whose name still haunted the minds of the kings and struck terror into the hearts of the commonfolk. It is, therefore, not at all surprising to find that his account suffers from certain obvious inaccuracies and misrepresentation of facts due to his ignorance of actual state of affairs obtaining during that period. Notwithstanding these discrepancies, his account in many respects is valuable and supports the stories of Sung-Yun and Kosmos and finds, in its turn, strong corroboration in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, the *Āryaśrīmañjumūlakalpa*, the *Pādatāditakam* and the Jaina sources.

Yuan Chwang says that Mihirakula killed the king of Gandhāra whereas from Sung-Yun and other sources we learn that Gandhāra was the chief province of the Ephthalite kingdom which also included the city of Gandhāra. He further says that the Hūṇa monarch established his capital at Śākala. Some scholars find these two statements from two different sources as contradictory.[1] But we see no reason why these two statements should be interpreted as "contradictory and baffling." Indeed, both Sung-Yun and Yuan Chwang are correct in their statements. The former refers to a period when Mihirakula, like his predecessors, was in full control of Gandhāra and Kashmir which is unquestionably attested by his copious coinage and literary accounts dealing with the history of those regions. Further, the inscriptional evidence proves beyond doubt that this Indian Attila was at the zenith of his power in about 530 A. D.,[1] and this was the period during which Kosmos found northern India under White Hūṇa domination.

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[1] Ibid., p. 197.

Yuan Chwang, on the other hand, reached the Upper Kabul valley during the summer of 630 A. D., just a century after Kosmos, and again passed through it on his return journey about 643 A. D. Conditions in the region had completely changed by this time and the traces of the White Hūṇa invasion and subsequent domination had almost vanished south of the Hindukush, atleast on the surface, though he had occasions to notice remarkable similarities in some of the customs of the Hūṇas and those still obtaining, particularly the form of writing used in Tokhāristan which was similar to that in the Kabul valley, during this period. It must, however, be admitted that he was far too much occupied with visiting and describing Buddhist pilgrimage places, miracle-working statues and the like for us to expect from him any detailed account of the political and linguistic conditions of the kingdom in the past as well as the present. But, despite these limitations, he has fairly succeeded in making his point clear regarding political condition of Gandhāra, a century before. It was after his ignonimous defeat (after 530 A. D.) at the hands of Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya and Yaśodharman that he returned to his capital but, to his utter bewilderment and anguish, he found both Gandhāra and Kashmir lost to his empire, the former having been usurped by his younger brother during his long absence and the latter having asserted independence, adding insult to his injury. Reduced to a wandering existence he sought and obtained asylum in Kashmir and later by intrigues and machinations succeeded in killing the king of Kashmir and placing "himself on the throne." It was after this successful coup that he wanted to wreck vengeance on his unobliging and treacherous brother and consequently he marched against Gandhāra, killed the king and placed himself securely in the region. In other words, it was re-conquest of Gandhāra and Kashmir—a fact which is supported by numismatic evidences as well.

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[1] Cf. his Gwalior inscription.

The massacre of the Buddhists as well as the Jainas (as we learn from the Jaina sources) in those regions may well be explained by the fact that the followers of these religions had a secret hand in intrigues leading to his overthrow because of his pronounced Brāhmaṇical leanings, for in no other regions have we any evidence or proof of his ferocious and violent behaviour towards the followers of these two sects. While giving an account of his reign in Kashmir, based solely on legendary accounts, Kalhaṇa contemptuously denounces him as "god of destruction," but the fact remains that the Brāhmaṇas of Gandhāra accepted gifts from him and in Śrīnagarī (Śrīnagara) he founded the temple of Mihireśvara.[1] Moreover, we do not hear of the persecution of the Brāhmaṇas by him any where as we do of the Buddhists and the Jainas.

It was shortly after his conquest of the lost regions that Mihirakula died. We, therefore, do not find any discrepancy or fundamental difference in the accounts of the two Chinese travellers who have, within their own limits and in their own way, faithfully depicted the picture as seen and heard by them.

As regards Yuan Chwang's reference to Śākala forming Mihirakula's capital, the only plausible inference that can be drawn in the present state of our knowledge is that Śākala (Sialkot) being an important administrative seat, served as an ideal kingdom of a warring monarch from where military campaigns could easily be directed against central and north-western India. Apart from strategic considerations, its geographical situation was another great factor to be reckoned with for administrative purposes and effective political control of the areas contiguous to it. Centrally situated Śākala could well have served the nerve-centre of political activities of the Hūṇas being nearer the Gandhāra region and other Hūṇa territories. It is possible, therefore, that Mihirakula in later years made Śākala his second but more important capital to which gradually shifted the political activities from Gandhāra.

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[1] *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, i, pp. 306–07.

Coming to the question of his overlordship of northern India we find that both the Chinese writers and Kosmos present a fairly good picture of the contemporary political situation, though at places they have exaggerated events partly because of their ignorance of the actual state of affairs due to their short stay in the country and partly because of their strong religious bias. But, the episodes they have described are largely supported by the Brāhmaṇical and Jaina works as well as by epigraphic and numismatic evidences.

It is really surprising to note that though considerable portion of India experienced the Hūṇa oppression for about a quarter of a century we have but stray references to this episode from Indian sources. Except Kalhaṇa, the Brāhmaṇical writers are almost silent. Even the former just makes a passing reference to this important event, though at places he denounces Mihirakula in most scathing language. He says that Mihirakula "the god of destruction," was the powerful king of Kashmir and Gandhāra and conquered India and Ceylon as well. An anti-Buddhist, he was a ruler of violent disposition whose heart-rending tales of cruelty and depradations have been painted, as it were, with a vengeance, both in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* and the *Si-yu-ki*. Kalhaṇa also describes his conflicts in Ceylon and South India in the following words :

"The people of nocturnal habits, seeing his forces at a distance, from the houses of Ceylon, trembled to think of another invasion of Rāmacandra. In return he (Mihirakula) stage of Magadha had created a situation that demanded a delicate handling through tact and diplomatic foresight. But, Mihirakula possessed neither of the two. He was, however, quick to realise the futility of boosting up a weakling like Vainyagupta who was no match for the situation and was consequently bundled out unceremoniously from the scene of Magadha unwept and unhonoured. He met the same fate that does generally befall the weaklings and quislings.

Narasiṁhagupta, though vanquished, had not yet reconciled to his humiliation and defeat and was looking for a favourable opportunity to strike back in order to regain his lost fortune and position. His exile of few years had made him bold to reoccupy the Magadhan throne which was at the time lying unclaimed, and reorganised his resources to prepare for the arduous war against the Hūṇa chief. In order to achieve his designs he wanted time which he got without any efforts on his part, for Mihirakula, too, was not in a mood to fight as he was faced with serious problems at home whose solution demanded his constant presence on the spot, atleast for some time. He, therefore, preferred diplomacy to war, made peace with Narasiṁhagupta and recognised him the rightful king of Magadha. In return Bālāditya acknowledged his suzerainty and accepted his vassalage by agreeing to pay him tribute which finds an unequivocal mention in Yuan Chwang's account. Thus Mihirakula, just by a stroke of diplomacy, gained everything without bloodshed whereas the Gupta king lost all but the throne of Magadha which yet imbibed the halo of the past glory of the Imperial Guptas.

The ambition of throne and fame has been so alluring through the ages that the monarchs often subordinated their souls to the thirst of kingly praise and military glory. The tragedy of history is that mankind has always bestowed more liberal applauses on their destroyers than on their benefactors. The praises of the 'great heroes' of history by poets and historians have kindled a dangerous emulation in the minds of their 'successors.' If Toramāṇa and Mihirakula were eloquent examples of this age-old universal tradition, Narasiṁhagupta was also no exception. The past glory of his great predecessors made him restive and inspired him to undertake great deeds, but unfortunately he had neither received the education of a soldier nor he possessed the talents of a general. He was, therefore, confronted with a crisis of conscience : he felt the genuine urge to perform great deeds but lacked the positive will and adeqate resources for it. This put him in a sad predicament and left no choice but to compromise his honour with the Hūṇa invader, to save his hard-won throne the loss of which he was not prepared to bear any further. Howsoever dishonourable the terms of the treaty may have been to the descendant of the great Guptas, there is no doubt that Magadha was saved, for the time being, from the horrible depradations of the dreaded Hūṇas who left the scene only to come back with greater fury and fire.

Besides Magadha, Kāśī and Kauśāmbī still formed parts of the Hūṇa empire. The mention of his eastern campaigns in the *Āryaśrīmañjumūlakalpa* and the discovery of a seal of Mihirakula, like that of his father in Kauśāmbī excavations clearly support the contention of Kosmos and Yuan Chwang that he was the overlord of northern India and exerted considerable influence in those areas. His rule over Central India till atleast 530 A. D. is unquestionably evidenced by his Gwalior inscription which refers to him as *atula-vikramaḥ patiḥ pṛthvyāḥ* ("possessed of unrivalled prowess and overlord of the earth"), [1] and the Mandasor stone-pillar inscription of Yaśodharman which describes him as *Hūṇādhipānāṁ kṣitipati* and *Sthāṇoranyatra yena praṇati-kṛpanatāṁ prāpitam nottamāṅgaṁ* ("......that famous king Mihirakula whose head had never previously been brought into the humility of obeisance to any other save the God Sthāṇu......"). [2] This finds further corroboration from the Jaina authors who describe historical events bearing on the life and activities of Kalkīrāja (Mihirakula), though they are sometimes mixed up with many legendary details. The Jaina authorities tell us that the early Gupta kings were immediately succeeded by the great tyrant Caturmukha Kalkin or Kalkīrāja in Pāṭaliputra. He was a paramount ruler (*mahīṁ kṛtsnāṁ sa bhokṣyati*) and was foremost among wicked men (*durjanādimaḥ*), a perpetrator of sinful deeds (*akramakārin*) and oppressed the world (*udvejita bhūtalaḥ*).[1] Our authorities also state that the tyrant Mihirakula died in A. D. 542, just a century before Yuan Chwang was on his travels and exactly 241 years before Jinasena wrote his passage relating to the Guptas, noted in the preceding pages. Jinasena says that he owed his information to chroniclers who preceded him (*kālavidbhirudāhṛtam*).[2] These chroniclers must have been as near in time to the period of the Hūṇa sovereignty as Yuan Chwang himself. In the light these facts, the opinion of the Chinese pilgrim that Mihirakula "lived some centuries previously" may be discarded as baseless as it comes into conflict with the statements of the Jaina writers which mostly rest upon contemporary Gupta inscriptions.[3] Moreover, it is to this great Hūṇa conqueror that the Jaina author Somadeva, a contemporary of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇarāja III (10th century), alludes when he says :

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[1] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, i, p. 401, v. 4.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 395, v. 6.

> *"nāmudrahasto'śodhito vā kaścitsvamaṇḍalaviṣaye praviśeni (nni)-rgacchedvā. Śrūyate hi kila Hūṇādhipatiḥ puṇyapuṭavāhibhiḥ subhaṭaiścitrakūṭaṁ jagrāha."*[4]

The passage purports to show that he had advanced as far as Citrakūṭa on the Mandākinī in Central India. It further shows that long after the decline and fall of the Hūṇa empire in India, the activities of the Hūṇas and their leaders, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, were remembered in tradition and legends which found repeated echo in some of the later works till the tenth century A. D. From the above discussion we also come to the conclusion that Mihirakula was the unquestioned sovereign of northern India for atleast fifteen years, if not more, from the date of his accession till 530 A. D. when his Gwalior inscription came to be engraved at his own instance by one of his subordinate chiefs.

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[1] Guṇabhadra's *Uttara-purāṇa*, ch. 76 :

"पुरे पाटलिपुत्राख्ये शिशुपाल महीपतेः ।
पापी तनूजः पृथिवीसुंदर्यां दुर्जनादिमः ॥ ३९५ ॥
चतुर्मुखाह्वयः कल्कीराजोद्वेजितभूतलः ।
उपत्स्यते मघासंवत्सर योगसमागमे ॥ ३९६ ॥
समानां सप्ततिस्तस्य परमायुः प्रकीर्तितम् ।
चत्वारिंशत्समा राज्यस्थितिश्चाक्रमकारिणः ॥ ३९७ ॥
षण्णवत्युक्तपाषंडिवर्गस्याज्ञाविधायिनः ।
निजभृत्यत्वमापाद्य महीं कृत्स्ना स भोक्ष्यति ॥ ३९८ ॥"

[2] Jinasena, *Harivaṁśa*, chap. 60, vs. 487–88, 582.

[3] K. B. Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[4] *Nītivākyāmṛta* (Bombay edn.), p. 79.

THE ERA OF DECLINE

The period between c. A. D. 530–542 ushers in a new phase in the life and career of this great general and conqueror. The preceding period witnessed the meteoric growth and expansion of the vast Hūṇa empire—vaster than that of the great Attila—under him, and he was so dreaded among the contemporary kings and commoners throughout the length and breadth of this sub-continent for about a quarter of a century that the very mention of his name was enough to cause many a heart jump in utter confusion and horror. But, the following period marks the sad end of a glorious era, the sudden eclipse of a brilliant star and the close of a great saga. For the first time now history records the humiliating defeat and discomfiture of a general who had never bowed his head before any one except Lord Śiva (*Sthāṇu*). With his defeat and disgrace the myth of the so-called invincibility of the Hūṇas completely exploded and the last of the great Hūṇa empires gradually vanished in the air. There seems to be a strange fatality in the history of the Hūṇas. They rose to the greatest height of power with their victory over the Guptas, and they were in turn completely shaken off their foundations by the latter forcing the way for their final exit from the stage of world history. The Guptas, too, having executed this historical revenge, withdrew slowly and sadly in the mystic past.

On the authority of Yuan Chwang and the Mandasor inscription of Yaśodharman we learn that Mihirakula was routed and finally ousted from his north Indian empire by two Indian emperors—Bālāditya (Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya) and Yaśodharman who freed the country from the Hūṇa yoke to the great relief of the people. There is nodoubt that two great battles were fought and the Hūṇa monarch was defeated on two occasions, but there is a great controversy regarding the time of the actual occurrence of the events and priority to be given to either of these two monarchs. Thus, the question arises : when and by whom was Mihirakula defeated and routed ?

We have two conflicting theories based on two different sources :

(i) There are three inscriptions, the Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula; the Mandasor stone inscription of Yaśodharman and the Mandasor stone inscription of Yaśodharman-Viṣṇuvardhana ; and

(ii) There is a long narrative given by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang (Yuan Chwang), according to which the victorious monarch was not Yaśodharman, but a certain king of Magadha, named Bālāditya-rāja who has been rightly identified with Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya.[1] This fact, however, does not find mention—direct or ·indirect—in any of the contemporary or later inscriptions.

We should remember that one century had elapsed between the composition of these two accounts : the inscription of Yaśodharman is contemporary with Mihirakula whereas the account of the pilgrim was written a little more than a hundred years later. Scholars are generally agreed that both the documents refer to the final defeat of the Hūṇa king. But, some of them dismiss the account of Yuan Chwang as unreliable and baseless.[2] Smith and others suppose an alliance between Yaśodharman and Narasiṁhagupta, showing that the battles

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1. Allan, *Gupta Coins*, pp. lv–lvi ; Heras, *IHQ*. iii, (1927), p. 2 etc.
2. Hoernle in *JRAS*, 1909, pp. 97–98 ; J. J. Modi, *op. cit.* pp. 594–95.

mentioned in the two sources are really one and the same,[1] and Fleet followed by Allan, Mookerji and others, while admitting the authority of both the documents, suggests that Mihirakula was probably defeated in the east by Narasiṁhagupta and in the west by Yaśodharman.[2] In other words, the Hūṇa king was first defeated by Bālāditya and then by Yaśodharman so that his final defeat could take place in Mālwā.[3]

From the above discussion it is clear that the controversy mainly centres round the account of the pilgrim. We fail to understand why an account, written just a century later, should be rejected disdainfully only because there are some chronological and factual errors in it. It would have to be rejected if it were evidently contradictory to a contemporary record. Exaggerations and omissions apart, the pilgrim's story does not basically conflict with those of Sung-Yun, Kosmos, Mandasor record and the Brāhmaṇical and Jaina authors. A close study of the two sources shows that the pilgrim's narrative does not, in any way, contradict any statement of the Mandasor record. On the other hand, it strongly, though indirectly, lends support to the latter.

The only point of difference in the two accounts is that Bālādityarāja of the pilgrim is depicted as having inflicted the final defeat upon Mihirakula. Rev. Heras has rightly suggested that though the Mandasor record speaks of the crushing defeat of the Hūṇa king, it does not say anything of his decisive expulsion from India.[4] It is here that Yuan Chwang makes a positive statement, though he does not give any credit to Yaśodharman for his thumping victory over the Hūṇas, either due to his Buddhist bias, or more probably, due to his ignorance of historical events. But, in any case, his description of the event itself, with all its limitations, is sincere and faithful and can not be summarily rejected. We agree with Allan that "it is hardly possible that Yaśodharman and Narasiṁhagupta on separate occassions each routed, took Mihirakula prisoner and released him."[1] From the two sources it can easily be inferred that while this is true of Narasiṁhagupta, it is not so clear in the case of Yaśodharman. The inscriptional phrases that his (Mihirakula's) forehead was *"for the first time* bent low down by the strength of Yaśodharman's arm in the act of compelling obeisance" and that his "head had never previously been brought into the humility of obeisance to any other save the God Sthāṇu" do not and need not, mean that Mihirakula was made prisoner by Yaśodharman. The plain meaning, derived from the epigraphic statement, suggests that he was defeated and forced to pay homage and tribute to his victor. In view of this and other considerations, the only fact to be determined now is : which of these two kings defeated him first and who routed him finally ?

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[1] Smith, *EHI*, (3rd edn.), p. 337; Havell, *The Aryan Rule in India*, p. 175; K. B. Pathak, "On the date of Kālidāsa" in *JBBRAS*, xix, pp. 35–43 etc.

[2] Fleet, "The Coins and History of Toramāṇa" in *IA.* xviii, p. 228.

[3] Allan, *Gupta Coins*, p. lix; Mookerji, *Harṣa*, p. 59.

[4] H. Heras, "The Final defeat of Mihirakula" in *IHQ*. iii (1927), p. 5.

Though "highly embellished"[2] the story of Yuan Chwang gives us many interesting details, all of which can not be dismissed as purely invented. The main fact of the story is certainly true,, that is, the defeat of Mihirakula by Bālādityarāja who is said to have fortified the frontiers of his kingdom and withdrawn the payment of tribute to the Hūṇa king on hearing of the cruelties practised by the latter against the followers of Buddhism of which he himself appeared to be a devout follower. It has been noted above that Bālāditya had acknowledged the suzerainty of Mihirakula and accepted his vassalage by agreeing to pay him tribute. This shows that the main theme of the story of the pilgrim is based on solid historical facts. The fact of his being a faithful Buddhist is also supported by Paramārtha in his *Life of Vasubandhu* [1] in which he mentions king Vikramāditya of Ayodhyā and his crown-prince as fervent patrons of this Buddhist monk. Further, Mihirakula's usurpation of Kashmir throne after his defeat by the Magadha king is also supported by Kalhaṇa who speaks of him atlength as one of the kings of Kashmir in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī.* [2]

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[1] *Gupta Coins*, p. lix.

[2] *Ibid*, p. lvi.

Thus, the main crux of argument against the Chinese story, apart from minor exaggerations in details, boils down to the only important objection relating to the chronological errors. In our view, this objection is not so serious as to condemn the whole story as baseless and nonsensical. We know that most of the facts coming through tradition suffer from obvious chronological errors because the past events while passing through popular mind have a knack of getting easily aggrandized, and "the figures transmitted by oral tradition are always liable to be changed and are generally exaggerated." [3] Infact, it is rather sad to comment that we do not have any reference to the defeat of Mihirakula in the contemporary or later Gupta epigraphs—a feat which was remarkable and which posterity could justly be proud of. Unfortunately the task was left to a foreigner to record the episode with all its thrilling details, a century after its actual occurrence.

The epigraphic records have little information to transmit, but on the whole they are important, though like the Chinese account, they also suffer from certain obvious inaccuracies. If the Chinese record can be accused of exaggerations and prejudiced character, the same can very well be said of the epigraphic stories which generally betray the tendency of heaping applauses on their issuers that they never deserved. In such circumstances if we place our full reliance on these stories, we are likely to land ourselves in a terrible mess, but if we reject them in entirety we would be going too far. Naturally, therefore, we have to steer clear our course and strike out a balance to reach the truth.

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[1] Cf. K. B. Pathak, "Kumāragupta, the Patron of Vasubandhu" in *JBBRAS*, xxiii, p. 185.

[2] *RT*. (trans. Stein), i, pp. 43-48.

[3] H. Heras, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

In the present case we have only three inscriptions—(i) the Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula (c. 530 A. D.) (ii) the Mandasor stone inscription of Yaśodharman (undated) and (iii) the Mandasor stone inscription of Yaśodharman (V. E. 589 = A. D. 532). It may be noted here that the defeat of Mihirakula by Bālāditya is not mentioned in any of these inscriptions.

The Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula (c. 530 A. D.) records the construction of a temple of the Sun god by one Mātṛceṭa, on the mountain called Gopa. This indicates that Mālwā was under his possession atleast up to 530 A. D. Together with this inscription we have the undated Mandasor stone pillar inscription of Yaśodharman whose column, like the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, was erected with a view to commemorating the glory and power of Yaśodharman. Accordingly, the dominions of Yaśodharman are said to have included the whole of northern India from Lauhitya, *i.e.*, Brahmaputra to the western ocean, and from the Himālaya to Mahendragiri. He further claims to have possessed countries "which not even the Guptas or the Hūṇas could ever conquer." [1] "The Janendra," goes the inscription, "had compelled Mihirakula to pay respect to his two feet." Thus, the statements concluisively prove that Yaśodharman had defeated Mihirakula.

Unfortunately this record is undated. But, we have yet another inscription of this king at the same place, *i.e.*, Mandsor which gives his date as Mālava (Vikrama) year 589 corresponding to A. D. 532–33. Like the first inscription, the second, too, opens with invocations to Lord Śiva and records the construction of a large well by one Dakṣa, whose brother, Dharmadoṣa was the minister of one Viṣṇuvardhana. The most curious aspect of this record is that while Yaśodharman is called "a tribal ruler" (according to some scholars), Viṣṇuvardhana, inspite of his high sounding epithets like *Rājādhirāja* and *Parameśvara,* is described to have acknowledged some kind of suzerainty on the part of Yaśodharman. As the date given in this inscription is 532–33 A. D., we can, with absolute certainty, conclude that this is also the date of Yaśodharman.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 394, vs. 4–5.

Jayaswal rightly suggests that, as the same events are recorded both in the inscription at Mandasor, and in the inscription of 533 A. D., under the name of Viṣṇuvardhana, Rājādhirāja-Parameśvara ; Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana are, therefore, one and the same person. Fleet while interpreting verses 5 and 6 suggested that they were not identical, and the former was a feudatory of the latter. According to him, Yaśodharman was a *Janendra, i.e.,* tribal ruler, and Viṣṇuvardhana a *narādhipati, i.e.,* king of men. But, both the words mean 'a king' and the context shows that they have been used for the sake of alliteration. In his own undated inscription, Yaśodharman is called *samrāṭ,* the same as *rājādhirāja-parameśvara* of this record. The passage *sa eva,* Viṣṇuvardhana's title *rājādhirāja-parameśvara* and the facts that Mandasor was the capital of Yaśodharman and the engraver, very probably an officer of Yaśodharman, go very strongly to suggest that Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana were names of one and the same king..[1] Moreover, verse 5 of the undated inscription refers to the *digvijaya* which the king claims to have performed, and gives the conventional boundaries of the *cakravarttikṣetra.* It seems to be a conventional *praśasti* and need not be entirely historical in all its details. There is no reason to believe that Yaśodharman actually conquered the whole of India from the Himālaya to the Mahendra and from the banks of the Brahmaputra to the Arabian sea. [2]

Whatever the exaggerations, two things stand out absolutely certain :

(i) Yaśodharmana's date is about 532–33 A. D; and

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[1] *Ibid*. p. 394, fn. 2.

[2] *Ibid*, p, 394, fn. 4; Sircar, *JRASB*, v, p. 407 ff.

(ii) before 533 A. D. and after c. 530 A. D., Mālwā and Western India were under the governorship of Dharmadoṣa who recognised Yaśodharman-Viṣṇuvardhana as his sovereign lord.

We have no earlier reference to Yaśodharman anywhere else, and this fact clearly indicates that he himself founded a new empire, sometime before 533 A. D., and certainly after 530 A. D. The epithet *ātmavaṁśa* in the Mandasor inscription of Viṣṇuvardhana makes it certain that Yaśovardhana-Viṣṇuvardhana happened to be the founder-ruler of this dynasty. As this piece of inscriptional evidence can not be doubted on any account, the problem gets all the more complicated. How can we reconcile this evidence regarding Yaśodharman's inflicting a signal defeat on Mihirakula with that of Yuan Chwang that Bālāditya was the victorious hero "who defeated Mihirakula and took him a prisoner"?

Different scholars have interpreted these two accounts in their own way and, as usual, they agree to differ and follow their own lights. Fleet, Allan and Mookerji, we have shown above, postulate that in the east Mihirakula was defeated by Bālāditya and in the west finally crushed by Yaśodharman. Heras suggests just to the contrary, *i.e.*, Mihirakula was first defeated by Yaśodharman and finally by Bālāditya as a consequence of which he was taken prisoner and when released, moved in concealment and poverty and took refuge in Kashmir.[1] This suggestion upsets the chronological order and is, therefore, quite untenable. Yaśodharman established his new empire between c. 530 A. D. and 533 A. D. which, as he himself claims, consisted of vast territories, including some of the former provinces of the Gupta empire and, therefore, Bālāditya can in no case be placed after Yaśodharman. Moreover, the tone of the Mandasor inscription that Mihirakula was compelled to pay homage to Yaśodharman tends to suggest that a decisive and final victory over the Hūṇas was affected by Yaśodharman, and not by Bālāditya.

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[1] H. Heras, *op. cit.*, p. 7 ff.

Smith's suggestion of a military alliance between Bālāditya and Yaśodharman is far-fetched and absolutely gratuitous and finds no mention—direct or indirect—in either of the two authorities. The peculiarity is that both the accounts suppose that their respective sovereign was the only or atleast the chief enemy of Mihirakula. Had such an alliance been a reality, neither of the two sovereigns could be the only enemy nor the chief enemy of the Hūṇa king.[1] Moreover, in his inscription Yaśodharman claims supremacy over the whole of northern India as well as over some provinces in the south : this makes it impossible for Bālāditya to have reigned anywhere at any time.[2] Had it been otherwise, Yaśodharman could not have so boldly proclaimed his suzerainty over the areas held by the Gupta ruler. The assertion that "the Gupta inscriptions ascribe the fall of the Huns to the *combined forces* of Yaśodharman in the west and Bālāditya in the east"[3] is utterly misleading for, nowhere in the Gupta inscriptions have we any reference either to Yaśodharman or to the fall of the Hūṇas, except the explicit mention of the latter's defeat in the Bhitarī pillar inscription of Skandagupta which is much early in the series.

From the above survey it may logically be inferred that Mihirakula was defeated in two different battles : first by Narasiṁhagupta and then by Yaśodharman, at two different places and dates. Recently, following Heras, it has been suggested by another scholar that "Mihirakula's defeat by Yaśodharman preceded Bālāditya's victory over the Hūṇas" and that "the evidence of the inscription itself is self-sufficient."[4] It is wrong to suggest that the inscriptional evidence is "self-sufficient" in this connection as the two Mandasor epigraphs, when read together in between the lines, make it absolutely clear that the sovereignty of Yaśodharman in Central India followed that of the Guptas and the Hūṇas.[5] Infact, Central

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[1] *Ibid*. p. 7.

[2] Dandekar, *op. cit.* p. 157.

[3] Visvanath, *International Law in Ancient India*, p. 59.

[4] R. K. Choudhary, *op. cit.* p. 130.

[5] Sircar. *op. cit.*, p. 394 fn. 2.

India was lost to the Guptas during the time of Toramāṇa which they could probably recover for a short period after the defeat of Mihirakula by Bālāditya, but soon after Yaśodharman finally took over the sovereignty of the province and annexed it to his own empire. The vague, rather conventional expression that Mihirakula's head had never previously been brought into the humility of obeisance to any other, save god Sthāṇu...... and whose forehead was painted through being now for the first time bent low down by the strength of his arm in the act of compelling obeisance,"[1] should not be taken seriously, for the same inscription significantly points out that at the time of his crushing defeat Mihirakula was merely a petty king of the Himālaya. Thus, the two inscriptions apparently seem to be conflicting in nature. The first seems to refer to a paramount ruler who was, till this defeat, supposed to be invincible while the second gives us the impression of a petty chief whose territory was confined to the Himālaya. Had he been a paramount sovereign, the author of the inscription would have taken every care to describe it in detail as a contrast study for the purpose of glorifying his master all the more. But, the inscription is silent on the point.

The account of Yuan Chwang, however, depicts him as a paramount ruler at the time of his war with Bālāditya who, after his defeat, was compelled to take refuge in Kashmir: this fact fully corroborates the reference in the Mandasor inscription to the position and locality of Mihirakula. All this goes to show that Mihirakula was defeated by Bālāditya in about 530 A. D. (probably 529 A. D., the date of the Khoh copper plate) and by Yaśodharman immediately after 530 A. D. (the date of the Gwalior inscription), the period of the rise of Yaśodharman.[2] This is further supported by other epigraphic records. The Betul plate of 518 A. D. refers to the Guptas and after this we have no record from this part of the country mentioning the imperial dynasty till the Khoh plates (529–30 A. D.) which refer to the rule of the Guptas. That Yaśodharman came to power after 529 A. D.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 391.

[2] Chattopādhyāya, *op. cit.* p. 199.

is also attested by the story of Yuan Chwang who speaks of a king of Central India as the successor of Vajra, the son of Bālāditya rightly identified with Yaśodharman,[1] coming after Bālāditya. In the face of these unassailable facts of history the claim of Yaśodharman that he defeated Mihirakula for the first time may convincingly be dismissed as a hyperbolic statement.

There is yet another objection from the same quarter. Raichaudhuri's suggestion that Mihirakula was first defeated by Bālāditya and finally by Yaśodharman, has been subjected to severe criticism which, in our opinion, is absolutely unwarranted. He has rightly suggested that "at the time of the war with Bālāditya, Mihirakula was a paramount sovereign to whom the king of Magadha had been a tributary, and with whom he dared not fight, being only anxious *to conceal his poor person.*[2] This is hardly possible after the Janendra of Mandasor had compelled the Hūṇa 'to pay respect to his two feet.' The victory of Bālāditya was certainly not decisive."[3] The "loss of the royal estate" was only temporary, and the tyrant soon placed himself on the throne of Kashmir and conquered Gandhāra.[4] To the court-poet of Yaśodharman, Mihirakula was pre-eminently a king of the Himālayan region. The statement that Mihirakula's head "had never been brought in to humility of obeisance to any other save (the god) Sthāṇu" shows that he refused to do homage to Bālāditya, and probably accounts for the order given for his execution by that king.[5] The interpretation seems convincing and conforms to the facts of history. Indeed, we fail to understand why this interpretation of the text (given by Keilhorn[6]

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1. *Ibid*, p. 199.
2. Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, vol. i, p. 168.
3. *PHAI*, p. 504 fn. 3.
4. Beal, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 171.
5. *PHAI*, p. 504 fn. 3.
6. *IA*, 1889, p. 219.

and accepted by Fleet who had previously misunderstood it) should not be acceptable to us. It is true that in a Nālandā stone inscription, [1] Bālāditya is described as a king "of irresistible valour and vanquisher of all foes," but the shameful role he played on hearing of Mihirakula's advance against Magadha by hiding himself "in the islands of the sea," does not, in the least, make the wretched weakling worthy of the epithets showered on him by the unscruplous court-poet. The myth of his so-called "irresistible valour" is thoroughly exploded by the story of the Chinese pilgrim whose partiality for this follower of Buddha is unquestionable. All honour, therefore, to the brave and faithful ministers of this weak king for defeating the tyrant and taking him as a prisoner.

Hoernle's suggestion that Yaśodharman had helped Bālāditya as a feudatory against the Hūṇas is equally untenable. On the basis of verse no. 21 of the Mandasor inscription [2] (532 A. D.) it is sought to prove that Yaśodharman "for his master's sake" bore "the burden even through difficult paths, unmindful of his personal happiness in any great measure." [3] In other words, Yaśodharman, so to say, was a feudatory and helped his master (Bālāditya) against the Hūṇas. But the reading of the text as well as the said verse does not convey any such sense. It is a gross misinterpretation of facts, for the expression "his master's sake" (......*vahati nṛpati-veṣaṁ kevalaṁ lakṣma-mātraṁ*......) actually refers to the praiseworthy service to his master by Dharmadoṣa who was the brother of one Dakṣa and the minister of Yaśodharman-Viṣṇuvardhana. Moreover, the defeat of Mihirakula and the Hūṇas is mentioned in the undated Mandasor inscription and not in the one under reference. A study of the two inscriptions does not give the impression that Yaśodharman happened to be a feudatory nor do the Gupta records enlighten us on this point. Further, the boastful claim of Yaśodharman in his inscription that he

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1. *EI.* xx, pp. 43–45.
2. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 391, verse no. 21.
3. R. K. Choudhary, *op. cit.*, pp. 132 & 130

possessed countries "which not even the Guptas or the Hūṇas could ever conquer"[1] precludes any such possibility, even remotely, of his being a feudatory only a short while ago.

Thus we can safely conclude that the Hūṇas under Mihirakula were first defeated by Bālāditya, and then finally routed and driven from the country by Yaśodharman to whom goes the credit for saving the country from a great national calamity.

We now summarise below the probable order of events which occurred in the course of the two Hūṇa wars leading to the final defeat and extermination of Mihirakula.

After the recovery of his throne, Narasiṁhagupta began to re-organise his kingdom which had been the scene of chaos and disorder for about a decade owing to internal feuds and intrigues as well as ferocious external invasions led by Toramāṇa and his son Mihirakula whom he had satisfied by successfully negotiating a treaty and agreeing to pay tribute as a vassal king. A devout Buddhist he beautified the land with monasteries and Buddha's images and by 'building orchards reservoirs, gardens, passages, bridges etc.' He thus gave the much-needed peace to a strife-torn and prostrate land which had not known orderly government since the departure of Budhagupta. While Narasiṁhagupta was busy with reconstruction work in Magadha, Mihirakula, the dreaded tyrant, was ruling over his Indian provinces with his capital at Sialkot in the Punjab and was mercilessly carrying on a systematic persecution of Buddhists.[2] The story of Yuan Chwang is fully supported by Sung-Yun, Kosmos (according to whom "he exacted tribute by oppression enforcing his demands with the aid of two thousand war-elephants and a great host of cavalry") and the Jaina authors and Kalhaṇa who calls him "the god of destruction."

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[1] *Sircar, op. cit.*, p. 394, verse no. 4.

[2] Beal, *Records of the Western World*, vol. i, pp. 166–67.

have hardly any parallel in the history of India. Pāṭaliputra was thoroughly destroyed and most of the inhabitants were massacred. The recent Kumrahār excavations [1] have brought to light the destruction of Pāṭaliputra, but in the absence of adequate data it could not be proved whether it was due to the Hūṇa invasion or to some other calamities, whereas in the Kauśāmbī excavations, noted above, the barbed arrow-heads and other weapons, obviously the instruments of massacre, pillage and unprecedented devastations, used by the Hūṇas under Toramāṇa and *Hūṇarāja* Mihirakula, have been discovered for the first time in large numbers. It may, therefore, be safely presumed that the destroyers of Kauśāmbī must have had pursued the same technique and device of destruction to sack and pillage the historic city of Pāṭaliputra.

The echo of its large-scale devastation and the subsequent terror among the populace resulting from the Hūṇa atrocities is found in Śyāmalika's *Pādatāditakam* [2] which gives a scintillating picture of the real state of affairs obtaining in Pāṭaliputra and other eastern provinces during this period. It shows that the Hūṇas had struck such a great terror among the people of Pāṭaliputra that they were mortified at the very sight of one, dressed in the Hūṇa garments. Illustrating this point it narrates the story of one Bhaṭṭi Maghavarmā, son of Senaka, the commander-in-chief, wearing Hūṇa dress and entering a house by opening the gate. The people in the locality got afraid at this sight but were soon relieved to know that the man was not a Hūṇa, but Maghavarmā. [4] From the above we may conclude that the Hūṇas had entered Pāṭaliputra in large numbers and could forcibly enter the houses of the citizens. Their presence was a constant source of fear to the people and any one, even other than the Hūṇas, could perpetrate horrible crimes in the Hūṇa dress. It also gives a brief description of some of the Hūṇa ornaments, eg., long wooden earrings hanging down the cheeks, which the followers of Bhaṭṭi Maghavarmā wore when they posed as Hūṇas and entered other's houses. This description leaves little doubt about the destruction of this great city by the ferocious invaders who had swooped down upon the plains of Magadha with a vengeance. It was in this train of destruction that Nālandā also suffered considerable ravages, though only partly. [1]

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[1] Altekar & Mishra, *Report on Kumrahār Excavations* (1951-55), Patna, 1959.

[2] The work, though written earlier, is, however, included in the *Caturbhāṇī*, a post-Gupta Sanskrit collection.

[3] Cf. the following description : "अये कस्य खल्वयमहूणे हूणमण्डनमण्डितः आर्यघोटकः पाटलिपुत्रकायाः पुष्पदास्या भवनद्वारमविष्करोति ।"

(निर्वर्ण्य) आं ज्ञातं एभिरिहाबद्धश्वेतकाष्ठकर्णिकाप्रहसति कपोलदेशैर्वद्धकरैरसज्जमप्यसकृत्सज्जमिति सांजलिप्रतिवादिभिर्लाटडिंडिभिः सूचितः सेनापतेः सेनकस्य अतत्यरत्नभट्टि मघवर्मा भविष्यति । तन्न शक्यमेनमनभिभाष्यातिक्रमितुम् । (*Caturbhāṇī*, p. 15).

But the capture and destruction of Pāṭaliputra could not satisfy the invader who hungered for the blood of the rebel king who had gone in hiding somewhere in "the swampy country." The rebel must be severely punished come what may. He, therefore, started a frantic search for him and "committing the army to his younger brother, himself embarked on the sea to go to attack Bālāditya." "The king, guarding the narrow passes, whilst the light cavalry were out to provoke the enemy to fight, sounded the golden drum, and his soldiers suddenly rose on every side and took Mihirakula alive as a captive and brought him into the presence of Bālāditya." [2] Thus, in this surprise attack, the subject and the master had changed places. Thereupon, Bālāditya ordered his crimes to be published saying "the field of religious merit connected with three precious objects of reverence is a public blessing; but this you have overturned and destroyed like a wild beast. Your religious merit is over, and unprotected by fortune you are my prisoner. Your crimes admit of no extenuation and you must die." [3] But, unfortunately the mother of Bālāditya intervened and he was released "to rule over some small kingdom in the north." [4] He was later treated with "extreme courtesy" and escorted from "the island" by the troops and a guard.

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[1] *JBORS*, xiv, p. 1 ff; also see *Records*, i, p. xci.

[2] *Records*, i, p. 169.

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] For details regarding this story see *Ibid*, pp. 168–71.

Some scholars suggest that it was in the course of this campaign that Mihirakula conquered Tirhut and annexed it to the Hūṇa empire. This thesis is evidently based on the wrong identification of a country, named *Tiel-lo* included by Sung-Yun in his list of forty countries said to have been won by Mihirakula. This *Tiel-lo* has been identified with Tirhut for which there is not the least justification. Mihirakula had doubtless advanced up to Kauśāmbī, but we have no trace of his occupation of the countries north of the Gaṅgā during this period.

Thus, the bloody drama enacted by the Hūṇa monarch climaxed in his own discomfiture and fall. The son and successor of Toramāṇa met with a fate which never before in the history of the Hūṇas any of their great chiefs had shared. His extreme vindictiveness and cruelty violently recoiled on his fortunes and the sovereign of a vast empire was overnight reduced to the status of a wanderer in the streets, while the agonising millions, heaved a sigh of relief. Humanity had ultimately truimphed over evils.

Some scholars [1] have painted Bālāditya as a national hero and his fight with Mihirakula as "a war of national honour and of survival of religion (Buddhism)." But, the events of this war point to the contrary. The conduct of Bālāditya throughout this war was quite reprehensive and unworthy of the descendant of the great Guptas. "I hear that these thieves are coming, and I can not fight with them; by the permission of my ministers I will conceal my poor person among the bushes of the morass"—these words uttered by the monarch himself eloquently speak of his cowardly nature, and not of his heroic demeanour. The policy which he had formulated and pursued could not promote the cause for which able sovereigns from Candragupta I to Budhagupta had lived and struggled. The nervousness that he betrayed during the period of this grave crisis was certainly an object of great concern at which Skandagupta would have looked askance. When dark clouds were looming large in the north-eastern horizon, Narasiṁhagupta, on both occasions, played the fiddle and shamelessly ran away for his own safety, instead of ensuring the protection of the country against the Hūṇa menace. It was really the brave soldiers and chiefs of Magadha who fought like great patriots and ultimately succeeded in defeating and capturing the great tyrant. Bālāditya figures nowhere in the picture and deserves no honour and applause as such. Even when he regained control of the situation he could not act wisely and statesmanly, for his misled piety resulting in the release of Mihirakula subsequently proved that the menace was not finally put an end to, and the country had to face another invasion from the same quarter within an incredibly short period.

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[1] *DKM.*, p. 106.

From the story of Yuan Chwang it is clear that Mihirakula's brother had meanwhile gone back and established himself in the kingdom. Thus, he lost his vast empire as well as his royal estate, "concealed himself in the isles and deserts; and going northwards to Kashmir, he sought there an asylum." Evidently, when retreating to Kashmir he lost all his possessions in India including Mālwā and after a few years "stirred up the people of the town to rebellion, killed the king of Kashmir and placed himself on the throne,"[1]—an episode also supported by Kalhaṇa. It was from his newly-won dominions that he launched an offensive against Gandhāra, captured it and destroyed Buddhist monasteries and massacred thousands of people. Having thus organised a vast army he then victoriously marched towards the east to regain his lost territories (c. 532–33 A. D.).

His dashing move towards Mālwā was sufficient to provoke the newly-risen sovereign Yaśodharman who had by this time carved out a vast principality at the cost of the Guptas and other powers. From his Mandasor inscriptions we learn that he had conquered even those territories which were previously not conquered by the Guptas or the Hūṇas. Such a conquering monarch could never be indifferent to the ominous movements of the Hūṇas who were once again trying to restore their lost dominions in Central India and elsewhere, after their defeat at the hands of Bālāditya. He had built up a formidable army and himself possessed the genius of a general who could face any eventuality with calm and fortitude. He dreamt of reviving and re-establishing an all-India empire but his efforts were challenged by the same people who had upset the political equilibrium of the country, killed the peace of the land and heaped untold miseries on the innocent mass. Yaśodharman marched ahead of a formidable army and met the Hūṇas under Mihirakula in the plains of Mālwā or somewhere in Central India. The Hūṇas, for once, met Skandagupta in Yaśodharman who routed them thoroughly and compelled homage from Mihirakula whose dream of restoring his lost dominions was shattered for ever (c. 533–34 A. D.). The poet of the Mandasor inscription (undated : 525–35 A. D.)[1] has given a graphic description of the episode which is reminiscent of the description contained in the Bhitari and Allahabad pillar inscriptions of Skandagupta and Samudragupta respectively. Mihirakula bowed down to the inevitable and retired to his original kingdom of Gandhāra, frustrated and broken heart, and was heard no more. He ruled, however, as a local chief for about a decade (c. 532–44 A. D.) and died unwept, unhonoured and unsung, at the age of seventy. [2]

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[1] Beal, *op. cit.* p. 171.

Yaśodharman shot up like a brilliant star in the political firmament of India by completing the task left incomplete by Skandagupta who had likewise saved the county from the Hūṇa menace. It is true, Bālāditya had defeated and imprisoned Mihirakula but his misled act of piety had led the country nowhere. It is possible that in the absence of a powerful monarch like Yaśodharman, the Hūṇas once again might have swept the country off its feet and re-established the reign of terror which the people had experienced for long. The Hūṇa invasion had changed the face of northern India,[1] and, had their power not been broken, they would have still further changed the face of the country. Yaśodharman came as a saviour and dealt the final and decisive blow to the Hūṇas who now disappeared as a great political force, broke up into fragments and soon after completely merged with the Indian population. And for this, the name of Yaśodharman has since been remembered by his country-men with respect and gratitude[2] in the form of Mālava era.

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 393 ff; Modi, *op. cit.*, pp. 589–95.

[2] Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

Practically all the authors of antiquity agree in picturing Mihirakula "as a peculiarly blood-thirsty tyrant." He was especially relentless in his persecution of Buddhism and Buddhist monks. Sung-Yun, Kosmos, and Yuan Chwang have almost the same tale to tell. Kalhaṇa compares him with "the god of destruction" and the Jaina authors condemn him as "the foremost among wicked men" and "a perpetrator of sinful deeds." Of his brave and pitiless nature we receive legendary details which quite tally with the description of these writers. One of these still survives to the present day in local folklore of Kashmir. It is said : when Mihirakula, on his return from conquests, reached the summit of the pass that leads into Kashmir, one of his war-elephants fell over a high precipice. The screams of the agonised brute gave the hard-hearted monarch such delight that he had a hundred more elephants hurled over the cliffs at the same place.

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[1] Kennedy, *JRAS*. 1908, p. 879.

[2] Modi following Hoernle believes that Yaśodharman was the popular king Vikramāditya of Ujjain known in traditions and legends. He also assumed that the famous Vikrama era was started by him commencing 57 B. C., which is further supported by Bühler on the following grounds : (i) the era of 56–57 B. C. was not founded in the sixth century, but was in use under the name of Mālava era for more than a century ; (ii) at that time no Śakas could have been driven from western India in as much as the country had been conquered by the Guptas more than a hundred years ago ; (iii) on the contrary, the foreign conquerors, the Hūṇas were driven out of Western India in the first half of the sixth century, not, however, by a Vikramāditya but by Yaśodharman-Viṣṇuvardhana, and (iv) there is no room at all in the sixth century for a powerful Vikramāditya of Ujjain whose exploits called forth a national upheaval in India (Bühler, *IA*., 1913, p. 247). We need hardly add that this is still a very controversial issue and leaves much to be desired in the absence of adequate historical data. (For different views see Modi, *op. cit*. pp. 589–95, Hoernle, *JRAS*, 1903, p. 549 ff; *Ibid*., 1909, p. 89 ff; Fleet, *CII*, vol. iii, pp. 147–48; *JRAS*, 1909, p. 99; Pathak, *JBBRAS*, vol. xix, p. 39; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 251–57).

This story relates to a particular point of the route which traverses the Pir Pantsāl Pass at a height of about 12,000 feet, and that a local tradition derived from it still survives among the hill-men of that neighbourhood.[1] Kashmir at that time was subject to a barbarian race, *i.e.*, the Hūṇas, where, according to Kalhaṇa, he (Mihirakula) had founded the temple of Mihireśvara and a big city in Holadā, named Mihirapura.[2]

But, it seems that he was more sinned against than sinning because of his attitude towards Buddhism and Jainism. With all his faults, it can not be denied that the Buddhist and Jaina writers were very much prejudiced against him. Sung-Yun's statement that he was a worshipper of the demons is quite unconvincing for his coins clearly depict him as a devotee of Lord Śiva which is further supported by the Mandasor inscription which describes him as bowing his head only to that God (Sthāṇu).

An impartial assessment of the evidences discussed above, leaves no doubt that he was brave, war-like but ferocious. His ambitions were insatiable and his idiosyncracies sometimes bordered on lunacy. Rash to the point of madness, erratic, arbitrary and tyrannical,[3] he possessed no virtues of his father and made the Hūṇa name dreaded throughout the length and breadth of this sub-continent. The result was that only within two generations the last traces of the Hūṇa empire were swept away from this country and with him the last great empire of the Hūṇas died a sad, premature death surviving neither in tradition nor in popular folk-lore. The dreaded glory of the Hūṇas built on violence and bloodshed soon faded away from the memory of the people who were the worst oppressed. The language of the violence is suddenly hushed, a meteor-like career comes to an abrupt end and history records nothing remarkable about his activities to transmit to the posterity.

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[1] M. A. Stein, "Notes on the Ancient Topography of the Pir Pantsāl Route" in *JASB.* 1894, p. 376 ff; *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (ed. Stein), i, p. 44; ii, p. 394.

[2] *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, i, 306.

[3] *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* : "प्रमादी, कामचारी च स राजागृह्चिह्नितः……"

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST PHASE

THE LATER HŪṆAS

The history of the Hūṇas in India, after Mihirakula, is a long, though scattered and disconnected, account of events and principalities which affected no remarkable change in the body-politic of the country, and exercised no material influence on the relations subsisting between the warring states aspiring for supremacy after the Guptas and Yaśodharman, either in north or in east or in west. The general belief that after Yaśodharman's great victory over Mihirakula, the Hūṇas were never heard of in India again is absolutely unfounded: on the other hand, they were now entrenched in different parts of central and north-western provinces like so many isolated pockets dotted over the areas. It is true, they had now ceased to be a major political force, yet they were strong enough, in their own pockets, to create troubles for the neighbouring powers and consequently invite their violent wrath during various military campaigns.

The early mediaeval inscriptions are full of the stories of their long, often bloody, encounters with the sovereign powers of the land, who were sometimes awfully ruthless in their dealings with the Hūṇas and merciless in destroying their small principalities. Inspite of these constant persecutions they could not be completely cowed down and wiped out. Infact, they constituted a permanent source of headache to the ambitious Indian kings who considered it absolutely necessary to crush them before launching on their military campaigns. But, where the forces of politics and power miserably failed, the ever-conquering forces of culture tremendously succeeded. The indomitable Hūṇas, notwithstanding their limited resources and crippled capacity to strike, although refused to submit to the various Indian powers, were gradually but completely overwhelmed by the irresistible tide of Indian culture and consequently merged with the various clans of the Rajputs and other castes through matrimonial alliances. They soon became an inseparable and indistinguishable part of the colourful Indian society which had earlier absorbed the Śakas, the Scythians, the Parthians and many other foreign elements in its labyrinthine structure.

The exit of Mihirakula from the political stage of north-eastern India was marked by a short interregnum which was soon disturbed by yet another wave of Hūṇa invasion. It is true that after Mihirakula there was no great Hūṇa leader to assert authority, but the lingering hope of retrieving their erstwhile fortunes still haunted the defeated and humiliated Hūṇas who had now shifted their headquarters to Kashmir.

On the authority of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* [1] we know that the dynasty founded by Mihirakula in Kashmir lasted several years after his death. They may be termed as the later Hūṇas, though Heras believes that they were "the successors of Mihirakula in Āryāvarta" and should not, therefore, be treated as "the later Hūṇas." [2] The assumption is wrong for we know that after the departure of Mihirakula from the north-eastern scene, the Hūṇas lost their hold over the Indian territories and were mainly confined to Kashmir and can not as such be strictly termed as "the successors of Mihirakula in Āryāvarta." Unlike the later Guptas, the later Hūṇas had no great role to play in the politics of northern India after they were routed by Yaśodharman and though they were scattered in pockets in western India, they did not, barring once, try to restore their fortunes or organise large-scale invasions. They were often involved in petty skirmishes and suffered heavily at the hands of the Indian kings who were, despite their broken and disorganised power, always apprehensive of their menacing designs.

Thus, what happened to the Hūṇas immediately after Mihirakula is not known. We do not even know who succeeded him on his death. The Jaina author, Guṇabhadra

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1. i, 49–50 (ed. Stein).
2. Heras in *IHQ.*, 1927, pp. 11–12.

(Śaka 760 = 838 A. D.) says that Kalkīrāja (Mihirakula) was the father and predecessor of Ajitañjaya whose wife was Celanā. From the description of the Jaina author it seems that unlike his father, he was a great devotee of lord Mahāvīra (Jinendra) and went to heaven along with his pious wife.[1] Evidently the account is based on hearsay and is neither supported by other literary sources nor by epigraphic evidences. Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* which gives names of rulers belonging to this dynasty in Kashmir, has nothing to say about Mihirakula's son. Infact verses 426 and 447 of Guṇabhadra's *Uttara Purāṇa* do not clearly indicate whether Ajitañjaya actually succeeded his father on his death. Yuan Chwang also has nothing to record about his activities. It, therefore, appears that the immediate successor of the Hūṇa monarch was his brother, and not his son about whom all our sources are silent, except the Jaina reference which depicts him more as a Jaina preacher and propagandist than his immediate successor and powerful ruler.

The accounts of Yuan Chwang tell us that "Mihirakula's brother, after the defeat of the tyrant by Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya, having gone back, re-established himself in the kingdom."[2] We know that Mihirakula was neither killed by Narasiṁhagupta nor by Yaśodharman. He retired to Kashmir and died after a short period. It was after this episode that his brother inherited the kingdom and organised an abortive invasion. Nothing else is known about him. We do not even know his name and activities. It has been suggested that he "most likely ruled as a petty Rājā in a province of Central or Western India," and "he and his successors continued to fight with the later Guptas and the representatives of the new power then residing in the north of India, the Maukharis." [1] True, the Hūṇas were by this time scattered all over central and western India in small pockets, but we have no mention, whatever, of any of their powerful chiefs in these areas.

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[1] Guṇabhadra, *Uttara Purāṇa*, verses 426 & 447 (Pathak, *Bhandarkar Com.* vol., p. 221) :

"तनूजः कल्किराजस्य बुद्धिमान जितंजयः ।
पत्न्या चालनया (चेलना) सार्धं यातैनं शरणं सुरम् ॥ ४२६ ॥
साम्यग्दर्शनरत्नं च महार्धं स्वीकरिष्यति ।
जिनेंद्रधर्ममाहात्म्यं दृष्ट्वा सुरविनिर्मितम् ॥ ४४७ ॥

[2] Heras, *op. eit.*, pp. 11-12.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE MAUKHARIS

Yuan Chwang says that the brother of Mihirakula went over to Kasmir and established himself there. It was probably from there that he directed his operations in collaboration with the other Hūṇas who were now entrenched in the various parts of central and western India. That there was a fight between the Hūṇas and the Maukharis is directly and indirectly attested by the Harahā record of Īśānavarman Maukhari (dated 554 A. D.) as well as the Asīrgarh and Aphsad inscriptions, but there is no mention of the name of the Hūṇa chief involved in this fight.

On the authority of the Harahā record Heras and others believe that the Hūṇas once again advanced under Mihirakula's brother and were ultimately defeated by Īśānavarman (554 A. D.), only a decade after Mihirakula's tragic exit from the scene. But, the Harahā record itself does not refer to the Hūṇas directly by name : on the other hand, we are told that Īśānavarman, while yet a crown-prince, defeated and conquered the Āndhras, the Śūlikas and the Gauḍas (Vaṅgas). [2] The nature of the description of the events contained in this epigraph suggests that the aim of the scribe has been to present an account of the enemies conquered by the Maukhari lord at different extremities of the empire. While the Āndhra king has been identified with a member of the Viṣṇukuṇḍin family[1] and the Gauḍas or the Vaṅgas with the dynasty founded by Mahārājādhirāja Gopacandra,[2] the identification of the Śūlikas remains yet a problem[3] and we are not in a better position to identify and locate them correctly.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

[2] Cf. verse 13 : "जित्वान्ध्राधिपतिं सहस्रगणितत्रेधाक्षरद्वारणम्
व्यावल्गन्नियुताति संख्य तुरगान्भङ्क्त्वा रणे शूलिकाम्.
कृत्वा चायतिमौचितस्थलभुवौ गौड़ान्समुद्राश्रया-
नध्यासिष्ट नतक्षितीशचरणः सिंहासनं यो जिती ॥

The Purāṇas describe the Śūlikas as a people living in the northern and north-western division. Tripathi[4] suggests that they are possibly identical with the Saulikas of the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*[5] and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, and are to be located in the south-east, near Kaliṅga, Vidarbha and Cedi.[6] Fleet connects them with the Mūlikas in the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, as a people living in the north-west division.[8] B. C. Majumdar, however, thinks that the Śūlikas lived on the sea-coast near the modern district of Midnapore (West Bengal).[9] Raychaudhuri, on the other hand, suggests that they "were probably the Cālukyas", for "in the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*[10] the Śūlikas and Saulikas are associated with Aparānta (North Konkon), Vanavāsī (Kanara) and Vidarbha (Berar). In the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*,[11] however, they are associated with Gandhāra and Vokkāna (Wakhan). A branch of the people may have dwelt in the north-west." Further, we have "a reference to Kulastambha of the Śūlki family.[12] Tāranātha[13] places the kingdom of 'Śulik' beyond

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[1] *PHAI.*, p. 602. For different views see D. C. Sircar, *Successors of Śātavāhanas*, p. 127; Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, p. 40.

[2] Chattopādhyāya, *EHNI*, pp. 221–22.

[3] *VGA*, p. 20.

[4] *HK.*, p. 41.

[5] xiv. 8.

[6] *IA*, xxii, p. 189.

[7] xiv, 48, 23.

[8] *IA*, xxii, p. 186; Rapson, *Catalogue of Coins of the Andhra Dynasty*, p. xxxi; *IA*, 1917, p. 127.

[9] *Orissa in the Making*, p. 105.

[10] ix. 15; xiv. 8.

[11] ix. 21; xx. 7; xvi. 35.

[12] *JRAS*, 1912, p. 128.

[13] *IA*, iv, p. 364.

'Togara' (Ter in the Deccan ?)."[1] From the above statement it is clear that the Śūlikas extended from Central Asia to Mahārāṣṭra region.

But, the controversies with regard to this identification do not end here : they go further and complicate the issue all the more. On the authority of a Tamil work, *Kaliṅgattupparani* of Jayagoṇḍān, Father Heras and Pires identify the Śūlikas with the Colas. This work narrates the circumstances leading to the victory of Karikāla over the Mukari, identified with the Maukharis.[2] Pires further suggests that Īśānavarman took revenge for this defeat, on the equation of Mukari with Maukhari which is not at all convincing as Mukari seems to have been the name of a place on the bank of the river Kāverī.[3]

Thus, the conflicting historical evidences do not at all provide us with a clue to the solution of this knotty problem. Philology, however, throws interesting light on the origin of the Śūlikas who appear to have been no other than the Hūṇas. In other words, where history fails to vouchsafe light, philology steps in to lift the veil of darkness and obscurity. *Śūlika* is suggested to be the name of a special branch of the Paiśācī Prākṛta[4] and the tribes using the language, indeed, occupied wide area. It is, therefore, quite possible that the Śūlikas mentioned in the Harahā inscription belonged to this stock (or tribe) and inhabited and occupied the north-western region which is also clearly hinted at in verse 11 of the Aphsad record. The inscription says that Dāmodaragupta of the later Gupta dynasty died in a battle against the Maukharis "whose elephants had caused the death of Hūṇa soldiers." It may, therefore, be safely argued that the episode which finds indirect mention in the Harahā record, is directly referred to in the Aphsad inscription, as in the second half of the sixth century A. D. we find the Hūṇas also occupying the same region where the Paiśācī Prākṛta had been quite in vogue. Thus, the Hūṇas of the Aphsad inscription may safely be identified with the Śūlikas of the Harahā record of Īśānavarman. This identification is further supported by the mention of the enemies of the Maukharis on different frontiers of the empire. To the east lived the Vaṅgas, to the south the Āndhras and hence to the north or the west must have lived the Śūlikas who were no other than the Hūṇas whom evidently Īśānavarman is said to have defeated.

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[1] *PHAI*, p. 602 fn. 5.

[2] Aravamuthan, *The Kāveri, Maukhari and the Śaṅgam Age*, p. 14 ff.

[3] Tripathi, *HK*., p. 41 fn. 5.

[4] P. C. Bagchi, *JDL*, xxi, pp. 1–10.

The Maukhari-Dāmodaragupta-episode, however, poses yet another question : who was the Maukhari king who brought about the collapse and death of Dāmodaragupta ? The identification of this king is interwoven with the identity of the Hūṇas so succinctly described in the Aphsad record of Ādityasena. Verses 8 and 11 of this record [3] and verse 13 of the Harahā inscription, [4] when read together, clearly indicate that the same person (Īśānavarman) has been referred to as one "whose stepping array of mighty elephants... had thrown aloft the troops of the Hūṇas (in order to trample them to death)," and who conquered and annihilated the Śūlikas. The general belief that, since Dāmodaragupta was the fifth later Gupta king, he was a contemporary of Sarvavarman who was also fifth in Maukhari line (as both the dynasties started about the same time) is quite unconvincing in the light of inscriptional evidences. Apparently it is Īśānavarman who is mentioned by name in verse 8 and later by dynastic appellation in verse 11 of the Aphsad record while he is referred to by name in verse 13 of his own record (Harahā record).

Tripathi has wrongly interpreted the passage when he says that it records Sarvavarman's successful encounter with his Gupta rival who had also defeated the Hūṇas. He suggests that the Hūṇas "began their movements during the time of Sarvavarman, and being a great power in northern India the Maukharis were then called upon to hold these nomads in check. The Vardhanas were not strong in this generation, and as Thāneśvara lay between Kanauj and the Hūṇa territories in the south-east of the Punjab; it may not be unreasonable to suppose that Sarvavarman's undertakings against the Hūṇas were a sort of help given to the Vardhanas to repel their depradations and save northern India from further Hūṇa upheaval."[1] We have shown above that such conclusions are far-fetched supported neither by literary evidences nor by epigraphic records of the period, and Sarvavarman in no case is indicated here as the spirit of the language of the Aphsad record strongly precludes any such sweeping presumptions. Moreover, the Hūṇas by this time were no longer a major political force in the politics of northern India.

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[3] B. Upadhyaya, *A Study of Ancient Indian Inscriptions* (Text), p. 83.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

We can not at the same time accept Sircar's view regarding the Hūṇa-Maukhari struggle that the "Maukharis possibly fought with the Hūṇas as feudatories of Bālāditya of the Imperial Gupta dynasty"[2] for the following reasons :

(i) Bālāditya ruled before 532 A. D., whereas Maukhari Īśānavarman had become the Mahārājādhirāja in c. 554 A. D. as the Harahā inscription suggests. Thus, there being a difference of about twenty-four years between the reign-period of Bālāditya and the rise of Īśānavarman there is no question of the latter acting as a subordinate of the former.

(ii) The language of the verses in question clearly demonstrates that the victory over the Hūṇas was achieved by Īśānavarman, the independent Maukhari king, and not by Īśānavarman, the so-called feudatory of Bālāditya. The entire credit for this achievement is given to the powerful independent king, and not to a subordinate feudatory chief. Had it been otherwise, the Aphsad record of Ādityasena, himself a later Gupta king, would have spared no pains to glorify the deeds of his great ancestor. The absence of any such reference to him, direct or indirect, naturally confirms the belief that there was no relation, whatever, between the .two. Moreover, Īśānavarman would not have referred to his victory over the Hūṇas (the Śūlikas) so confidently in his inscription, unless he alone was responsible for it.

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[1] *HK.*, pp. 47, 54.

[2] D. C. Sircar, *JRASBL*, xi, p. 70 fn. 4.

The above discussion may now be summed up in the following words :

(i) Īśānavarman defeated the Hūṇas who had again advanced presumably under Mihirakula's brother, though it is not unlikely that the Hūṇas might have again been defeated by his son, Sarvavarman as the Asirgarh seal would suggest. But, in no case is the latter to be identified with the conqueror of the Hūṇas referred to in the Aphsad inscription. The Hūṇa menace had long been there and from the Asirgarh inscription we learn that Harivarman Maukhari, the first king of the Maukhari line, checked the Hūṇa onslaught through the military assistance to the Guptas (Kṛṣṇagupta of Mālwā ?) and probably received some territories in recompense.[1] Even after their final defeat at the hands of Īśānavarman, the Hūṇas seem to have dominated the north-west frontier as we shall see later.

(ii) The Śūlikas of the Harahā record were really the Hūṇas of the Aphsad inscription, the only difference being that while they have been referred to by their tribal name in the latter, they have been mentioned as a linguistic stock belonging to the special branch of the Paiśācī Prākṛta, *i.e.*, *Śūlika*, in the former.

The history of the Hūṇas after their defeat and discomfiture by Īśānavarman once again recedes into obscurity. Their efforts to revive their lost fortune and glory proved in vain and they had to reconcile themselves to the changed circumstances which permanently impaired their power and position. Only a Toramāṇa could have arrested the process of deterioration and performed the miracle. But, that was not to be. An empire built mainly on blood and iron does not last long after the withdrawal of the strong arm from its scene. The force of violence and barbarous tyranny leaves behind a trail of bitterness and reaction which ultimately lets loose all the pent-up forces of anarchy and disorder with the result that the mighty fabric of the empire reared by the genius of one or two monarchs collapses like a house of cards amidst the blazing storm of popular discontent and revolt. We have seen how the outlying provinces of the Hūṇa empire in India fell off one by one and the citadels of the empire became turbulent scenes of violent upheavals, forcing Mihirakula to retreat to his original headquarters in north-west provinces and finally to Kasmir. The rise of Yaśodharman dealt the final blow to their fortunes and shattered all hope of their revival. Mihirakula's brother made a vain bid but miserably failed and was crushed by Īśānavarman, and the Hūṇas now ceased to be a major power and were permanently confined to their far-flung pockets. Gradually they lost even their identity and left nothing behind to record or remember.

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[1] Dandekar, *op. cit.* pp. 167, 173.

THE HŪṆAS OF THE NĀLANDĀ SEALS

The history of the later Hūṇas is more or less an unconnected account of events and episodes without any string whatever. Although most of our indigenous sources of information are cut off at this period, it is fortunate that a few literary and epigraphic records afford a faint ray of light on this tale of tremendous confusion. Hiranand Sāstrī in his *Nālandā and its epigraphic materials* has tried to throw some light on the history of the Huṇas after Mihirakula on the basis of two fragmentary seals containing the geneology of a ruler whose name is unfortunately missing, and to which recently attention of scholars has been drawn by A. Ghosh.[1] These seals contain the names of rulers who are otherwise known to us from the coins belonging to the Ephthalite stock. The geneology, as known from the seals, is as follows :

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[1] *IHQ.*, xix, pp. 188–89.

Mahārāja Lavkhāṇa
|
(Mahārājādhirāja) name missing
m. Vittavvadevī
|
Mahārāja Jarīva
m. Melyadevī
|
(Mahārājādhirāja) name missing
|
Name missing
(author of the seal)

The above geneology is confusing and amusing at the same time. It gives the names of the Mahārājas who were definitely of a lower status, either a subordinate king or chief, but curiously enough omits the names of the Mahārājādhirājas who certainly held a higher status, that of a king or a monarch. It is difficult to determine the factors responsible for this act of omission and commission but the designations, as they are, at any rate suggest that the dynasty, after Mihirakula, passed through serious political convulsions that impaired their power and position, often costing their independence. It is likely that they might have maintained their position for some time, even after the withdrawal of Mihirakula, during the period of disorder and anarchy that immediately followed the departure of the latter, as the Nālandā seals would suggest. In the process they faced various ups and downs, sometimes losing their status, often regaining it : nevertheless they maintained their precarious hold on Nālandā and the adjoining regions. This state of uncertainty, however, ended with the victory of Īśānavarman and they finally deserted the scene and went over to Kashmír, their original headquarters.

Though the seals do not give any indication of their lineage, there is, however, no doubt that they were the Hūṇa successors of Mihirakula. The names of the two chiefs on the Nālandā seals are also preserved on their coins found in Kashmír, and the probable identity of Lavkhāṇa and Jarīva of the seals with the Hūṇa Lakhāṇa and Jarī of the coins can not be ruled out, especially when the palaeography of the seals and coins indicates the same period for them.[1] The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* also mentions one Lahkhāṇa Narendrāditya as ruler of Kashmir after Mihirakula who may be identified with Lakkhāṇa Udayāditya of the coins.[2] Cunningham also describes and figures two rude gold coins of a king of Kashmir, bearing the legend *Śrī Narendra* whom he identifies with *Narendrāditya* of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. These coins are of ordinary debased Kidāra type,[3] with *Kidāra* under the king's arm.

Similar coins are also known of Deva Ṣāhi Khiñgila who is identified with Khiñkhila, mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* as one of the kings who succeeded Mihirakula and who is said to have been also known by the Hindu title, *Narendrāditya.* Besides, we have also copper coins of the period, with the legend, *Jayatu Śrī Narendra* which may have been issued by the same chief. But, by all means, it seems certain that *Śrī Narendra* was distinct from *Khiñgila Narendrāditya.*[4] The obverses of the two specimens of Udayāditya's coinage are depicted in very clear woodcuts in Prinsep's *Essays.*[5] The legend is perfectly legible and unmistakable, except for the second and third character of the second word. Udayāditya appears to be a mere title similar to the *Vikramāditya, Bālāditya* and other titles of like formation assumed by the Gupta kings. The early Hūṇas borrowed the titles of the Kuṣāṇa monarchs, and their successors adopted high sounding epithets similar to those adopted by the Gupta monarchs in consonance with the existing tradition, to show off their special status as monarchs, even though in most cases, the fact was just the reverse. Besides the titles, the Hūṇas (Toramāṇa, Mihirakula and their successors) also imitated the contemporary Gupta (silver) coinage, and they appear to have observed a similar practice in Kashmir. We have shown above that Cunningham's suggestion that the Udayāditya coins may have been struck by Lae-lih, the father of Toramāṇa, is wrong as neither was this Lae-lih father of Toramāṇa nor did he issue any independent coinage of his own in Gandhāra.[1] They were really issued by the successors of Mihirakula in these areas.[2]

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[1] For the coins see V. A. Smith, *JASB.*, 1894, pp. 180-81; Cunningham, *Num. Chron.*, 1894, p. 278, Pl. ix (vii), figs. 10, 13; *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 26. He has cited four specimens of Udayāditya coins.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 43, Pl. iii, fig. 5.

[4] *Ibid.*; also see *JASB.*, 1894, p. 189.

[5] Nos. 3 & 4, vol. i. p. 411.

Though Kalhaṇa's narrative, before the history of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, is often confusing, nevertheless it can safely be assumed that this dynasty was in existence during the period under review, as in the second half of the sixth century A. D., the Hūṇas were once again defeated, first by Īśānavarman and then by Prabhākaravardhana of Thāneśvara and this probably explains the assumption of the fluctuating designations like *Mahārājādhirāja* and *Mahārāja*, attributed to the kings on the Nālandā seals. At the same time it may also be argued that we can not treat them to be the direct successors of Mihirakula just on the basis of this slender piece of evidence. They might have been ordinary chiefs who were left in the charge of Nālandā and the adjoining tracts after the defeat and departure of Mihirakula from Magadha. But, the seals have their own importance as they confirm, for the first time, that the Hūṇas had actually extended their conquest right up to Nālandā. In view of this the only possibility is that it was one of the members of this dynasty who, in collaboration with the armies of Mihirakula's brother, met the forces of Īśānavarman and was ultimately defeated and repulsed.

The above possibility is further supported by numismatic evidences. We have some coins of Īśānavarman and also his son and successor Sarvavarman, dated in the Hūṇa era, belonging to the same type as the hemidrachms of Toramāṇa and the Guptas. The obverse generally bears the head of the monarch to left, as in Toramāṇa's coins with the date apparently in the same era as Toramāṇa's 54. The reverse has the Fantail Peacock device with the legend *vijitāvanirvanita...* the rest including the king's name being unfortunataly completely obliterated. This coin is probably of Īśānavarman, a specimen of which with the same date is figured in Cunningham's *Coins of Mediaeval India* (Pl. ii, 12).

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[1] *Infra.*, chap. iii.

[2] *Infra*, chap. vii (Coinage); also see Stein, *op. cit.*

The other coins bear the head of the king to left and are dated in the same era (58) on the obverse. The reverse is the same with the legend *vijitāvanirvanipati Śrī Sarvvavarmana deva jayati.*

These coins show that immediately after his victory over the Hūṇas, Īśānavarman and his son Sarvavarman issued coins in imitation of the Hūṇa currency to mark the end of their departure from the political scene as did the Hūṇas when they wrested power from the Guptas. Both of them closely imitated the pattern of the vanquished, but effected certain changes, for instance, head to left in the ordinary existing device to mark the distinction, though in matters of dating and other details these coins are but crude imitations of their proto-types.

The Hūṇa-Maukhari episode resulting in complete rout of the Hūṇas seems to have marked, once for all, the end of their ambitious designs to revive their lost empire. We have no details of the measures taken by the Maukharis after the defeat of the Hūṇas, but there is no doubt that they must have been crushed ruthlessly as a result of which they could not raise their heads for some time. This is evident from the contemporary literature and epigraphic records which practically take no notice of them despite the fact that they were still confined to their various pockets. This paucity of material also speaks of their completely broken power which was no longer considered to be a force to reckon with in the politics of north-eastern India during this period.

But, inspite of their broken power, it can not be categorically asserted that this was the final battle that put an end to the Hūṇa power in India. It is true, their designs to revive their old kingdom and fortune had been completely frustrated, but at the same time there is no denying the fact that after sometime they again became restive and turbulent in Kashmir and other parts of the country where they were still residing in groups. Epigraphic records and literature of the later period speak frequently of their activities and consequent clashes with the contemporary powers.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE VARDHANAS

The age of the Vardhanas witnessed their feverish activities once again. In the north of India, *i.e.*, Kashmir they became so turbulent that the Vardhanas felt the necessity of curbing their power which had assumed the shape of a threatening menace to the infant Vardhana kingdom. Indications in the *Harṣacarita* suggest that the Hūṇas had retained their hold in the north-west inspite of the fact that they had been subdued in Central India. Prabhākaravardhana had to fight against them and towards the close of his reign he had to send his son and crown-prince Rājyavardhana again to defend the frontiers of the kingdom against the Hūṇas. They had augmented their activities during the time of Īśānavarman but the Maukharis held them in check by thoroughly defeating them. Thāneśvara, the kingdom of the Vardhanas, lay between Kanauj and the Hūṇa territories in the south-east of the Punjab and was thus dangerously exposed to the Hūṇa menace. It is, therefore, not improbable that the Vardhanas secured formidable help from the Maukharis in their encounter with the Hūṇas to repel their depradations and save northern India from another upheaval.

The *Harṣacarita* describes Prabhākaravardhana as "a lion to the Hūṇa deer, a burning fever to the king of the Indus land, a trouble to the sheep of the Gurjaras, a bilious plague to the lord of Gandhāra, a looter to the lawlessness of the

Lāṭas and an axe to the creeper of Mālwā's glory."[1] The passage is significant as it throws light on the different powers of the time, but it hardly shows that Prabhākaravardhana had conquered and annexed these territories: on the other hand, the nature of description simply suggests that he was on hostile terms with them.

The reference to the Hūṇas and to Gandhāra separately is remarkable, for we know that Gandhāra was under the possession of the Hūṇas. The White Hūṇas or the Ephthalites had overrun the north-western frontier provinces and Kashmir, and about the beginning of the sixth century A. D. they had already set up an independent kingdom in Gandhāra. The suggestion that "Bāṇa probably refers to this Ephthalite Gandhāra kingdom"[2] does not seem convincing, or else the two would not have been mentioned separately. There was definitely something wrong with this country during this period, although later, probably after Prabhākaravardhana and before 529 A. D., it passed under the Kuṣāṇas of Kāpiśa. The *Si-yu-ki* while describing Gandhāra (*Kan-to-lo*) says: "the royal family was extinct and the country was subject to Kāpiśa"[3]—a fact which is also attested by Bāṇa in his description of the famous battle.

The battle against the Hūṇas seems to have been a protracted one, as during this expedition the crown-prince is described as having spent several days "on the skirt of the Himālayas." The episode reminds us of Skandagupta who is also said to have spent several nights on bare earth in the course of his war with the Hūṇas. But, it seems that he did not gain any decisive victory over them. Bāṇa's poetical description of Prabhākaravardhana's excellence and greatness as compared with other contemporary rulers may be partially true, but the hard fact remains that the "Hūṇa deer" instead of being overawed and cowed down was once again trying to pounce upon the "lion" himself in the northwest, for 'towards the close of his reign the kingdom was so seriously disturbed by the Hūṇa menace' that Prabhākaravardhana had to despatch the crown-prince with a strong army to cope with the increasing danger (604–05 A. D.). The battle once again was protracted and fiercely bloody and the prince received many wounds while fighting the Hūṇas. After having defeated them he returned to the capital on receiving the news of the death of his father with "limbs emaciated" and "long white bandages, bound about arrow-wounds received in battle." [1]

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[1] Bāṇa, *Harṣacarita* (trans. Cowell and Thomas), p. 101. cf. the following relevant verse; "हूणहरिणकेसरी सिंधुराजज्वरो गुर्जर-प्रजागरहः गान्धाराधिपगन्धद्वीप कूटपाकलः लाटपाटवपाटच्चरः मालवलक्ष्मीलतापरशुः" (*Harṣacarita*, Cal. edn. pp. 243–44.).

[2] S. Chattopādhyāya, *op. cit.*, p. 236; also see Bühler, *EI*, i, p. 69.

[3] Watters, i, p. 199.

The fight of Rājyavardhana with the Hūṇas though decisive from military point of view, could not yield results politically, as the danger of the Hūṇa upheaval was still haunting the mind of Rājyavardhana when he became king on the death of his father. When he started on a military campaign against the king of Mālwā who had murdered his brother-in-law Grahavarman and consequently imprisoned his sister, Rājyaśrī, he gave instructions to his younger brother, Harṣavardhana to remain behind with all "the kings and elephants, probably with a view to guarding the rear against any fresh Hūṇa upheaval, and asked only Bhaṇḍi to follow him with some ten thousand horses." [2] This alertness on the part of the Vardhanas, even when they had to face a greater enemy, makes it absolutely clear that the Hūṇas, though admittedly defeated and subdued, were yet a political menace whom they could ill-afford to ignore, say at their own peril. In this connection it is interesting to refer to the suggestion of R. K. Mookerji that Bhaṇḍi was of Hunnish origin as "the name Bhaṇḍi itself is a Hūṇic rather than a Sanskrit name." [3] It is difficult to follow on what grounds he makes this far-fetched

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1. *Harṣacarita* (trans. Cowell and Thomas), 1897, p. 165.

2. Tripathi, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–65; *Harṣacarita* (Cowell & Thomas), p. 175.

3. *Harṣacarita*, p. 61.

assertion. A similar suggestion was also advanced by Hoernle[1] who argued that Bhaṇḍi meaning "buffoon" was a strange name for a prince. It is true that this is a cynical name but such names were not uncommon in ancient times as well as in modern age. We have some such instances in the names of king Gardabhilla [2] or Śūdraka, [3] authenticated from inscriptions and literary accounts. Moreover, this would presuppose the assimilation of the Hūṇa elements into the fold of the Hindu population by this time for which there is absolutely no justification, as the process of assimilation began only after the seventh century and completed by the end of the twelfth century. Infact, Bāṇabhaṭṭa furnishes some details about Bhaṇḍi who was Harṣavardhana's cousin, but he tells us nothing on the strength of which any suggestion can be ventured regarding his lineage and political status. The very fact that he was Harṣa's cousin precludes any possibility of his being a Hūṇa for, otherwise it would presuppose that Harṣa himself came from Hunnish stock which is all the more preposterous.

THE HŪṆAS IN THE POST-HARṢA ERA

The history of India in the post-Harṣa era is almost silent on the activities of the followers of the great builders of the vast Hunnish empire, for about two centuries. The power of the sword which the great leaders had built in an extensive monarchy could no longer be sustained in a scattered small community in which they were now transformed. With a handful of men such a union would be ineffectual and with an unwieldy host it would be unpractical. Their licentious fury was probably the first symptom and cause of the gradual decline in their power. They met with calamity after calamity, defeats after defeats at the hands of the Indian kings and were subdued for a pretty long time with the result that they underwent a remarkable alteration of their character or conduct, and neither the spirit, nor the forces, nor the reputation of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula could any more inspire their followers to get on to headlong clash with the Indian powers who often battered their already broken artillery even on the slightest pretext.

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[1] *JRAS.*, 1903, p. 560.

[2] *JBBRAS.*, ix, p. 148.

[3] *IA.*, xvi, p. 64; *PASB.*, 1879, pp. 220–21; Tripathi, *op. cit.*, p. 64 fn. 4.

But, the early mediaeval history of northern India throws refreshing light on the part played by the subdued Hūṇas and their relations, political and marital, with the Gurjara-Pratihāras, the Cedis, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Pālas and the Paramāras. The epigraphic records of the period faithfully cover their war-like activities and point to their gradual merger and assimilation in the orthodox Hindu society through clashes and subsequent matrimonial alliances. The scattered bands of the Hūṇas had not yet shaken off their primitive character and war-mentality and got involved in fierce clashes with all the major powers of the time one after another on some score or other. But the redeeming feature of these bloody clashes was the gradual emergence of a new political race on the Indian scene resulting from the blending of two widely divergent cultures—the Mongol and the Indian. This new race—the Indian Hūṇas—while on the one hand inherited the fighting genius and sturdy character of their ancestors, on the other imbibed slowly the finest traits of their new cultural contacts with the royal Indian families and aristocracies. And, in no time, they came to be regarded as one of the numerous clans of the fighting Rajput community all over the country.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE GURJARA-PRATIHĀRAS

The earliest reference to the clash of the Hūṇas with the Gurjara-Pratihāras is noticed in the Unā plate, found at Unā in the Junagarh State, Kathiawar (dated Vikrama saṁvat 956 = A. D. 899) of the time of the Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla. The record is interesting as it gives the names of two Hūṇa chiefs—Viśada and Jājjapa. It says that Balavarman, a feudatory of the Pratihāra king of Kanauj, defeated one Viśada and "by slaying Jājjapa and other kings freed the earth from the Hūṇa race."[1] It is difficult to identify these two chiefs who were evidently the Hūṇa leaders of the locality. In the ninth century there was a *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* situated to the north-east of Mālwā which was probably ruled over by Jājjapa, a Hūṇa chief or king whose successors were defeated and crushed by the Paramāra king Sīyaka II and his successors Vākpati and Sindhurāja. It seems that Viśada was the leader of the Hūṇa army under king Jājjapa. The commander was defeated and killed along with his master by the Pratihāra forces under Balavarman who also claims to have killed "other kings" and "freed the earth from the Hūṇa race." Who the other kings were, it is not mentioned, nor are we in a position to determine their identity and sphere of influence. The language of the inscription, however, tends to suggest that the so-called "other kings" were either of Hunnish origin or their collaborators who were killed while fighting against the forces of the Pratihāras. But, the Pratihāra claim that the earth was freed from the Hūṇa race seems utterly exaggerated and absurd in view of the fact that the Hūṇas, even after this defeat, continued to be a powerful force in this and other areas and just after a few years they were again involved in a violent clash with another Pratihāra ruler as is evident from the Kardā plate.[2]

This plate found at Kurdā or Kardalā in the Talod tāluka of the Khandesh district is dated in the Śaka year 892 (A. D. 972–73) of the time of Kakka or Kakka III and credits him with having conquered the Gurjara, Hūṇa, Cola and Pāṇḍya kings. No details are recorded in the inscription which simply refers to this episode and passes over. The names of the kings are not given nor are we told what occasioned his military campaigns against these rulers. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that the Hūṇas were still an active political force in this part of the country and always figured in the list of the kings designed to be conquered by the ambitious rulers of the age. Their relations with the Pratihāras, as with others, were not at all friendly during this period, though in succeeding ages they were aligned to them through matrimonial alliances.

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[1] *EI.*, ix, p. 1 ff.

[2] *IA.*, xii, p. 265.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE PĀLAS

In the north-east the Hūṇas came into conflict with the Pālas of Bengal. With the assumption of sovereignty by Dharmapāla "the history of Bengal entered upon a complicated stage characterised by the rivalry of the Pāla dynasty with other powers of the time" [1] especially the Gurjaras and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. The Gurjaras are believed by some scholars to have come from Central Asia and entered India along with the Hūṇas in the fifth century, but this alleged foreign origin is disputed on grounds which we have discussed in the following chapter. The Nālandā plate of Dharmapāla, like the Manghyr plate of Devapāla, mentions *Gauḍa-Mālava-khaśa-kulika-Hūṇa* , as being his *sevakādin* (attendants) and *pāda-padmopajīvinaḥ.* [2] But the Khalimpur. grant, [3] dated in the 32nd year of his reign, mentions only the rulers of the Bhojas, Matsyas, Madras, Kurus, Yadus, Yavanas, of Avanti, Gandhāra and Kīra, and not the Hūṇas, though Keilhorn [4] believes that inclusion of the Yavanas in the list along with the Yadus is a mere poetical device. It is also suggested that these Yavanas represented the Arabs who had already founded a settlement in Sind and were exercising some influence on Gujarat and Kathiawar at the time. [5]

The mention of Gandhāra, which then comprised the present districts of Peshawar and Rawalpindi, in the present record may also have some indirect bearing on the Hūṇas who were in possession of these areas even when they were deprived of their northern possessions and forced to confine their activities to their original settlement. The term *Yavanas* or 'the rulers of Gandhāra' may indicate indirectly the Hūṇas who are mentioned directly in the Nālandā plate. The nature of the inscriptional evidence, however, tends to suggest that there was no violent armed clash between the Pāla monarch and the aforesaid kings who, in order to avoid indiscriminate bloodsheds and consequent humiliation, seem to have voluntarily accepted his suzerainty and paid their homage which is clear from the terms *sevakādin* and *pādapadmopajīvinaḥ* used in the Nālandā records in the context of Dharmapāla's victories and conquests.

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[1] B. C. Sen, *Some Historical Aspects of the inscriptions of Bengal,* p. 312.

[2] *EI*, xxiii, p. 291, lines 14–15.

[3] *EI*, iv, p. 248.

[4] *EI*, iv, p. 246.

[5] *JRAS*, 1909, p. 257; *ASI*, 1903–04, pp. 279–80.

The conflict of Devapāla, the son and successor of Dharmapāla, with the Hūṇas is figuratively described in one of the passages of the Garuḍa pillar inscription which says that Devapāla inflicted a crushing defeat upon the whole host of the Utkalas, deprived the Hūṇas of their prestige and broke the conceit of the lord of the Draviḍas and Gurjaras (*utkīlit-Otkala-kulaṁ hṛta-Hūṇa-garvvaṁ kharvvīkṛta-Draviḍa-Gurjjara-nātha-darpam*). [1] It is rightly suggested that he could have pounced upon the principalities of the Hūṇas and the Kambojas only after his successful campaign against the Pratihāra rulers of Kanauj as their country lay further to the west which was one of their principalities (*Hūṇa-maṇḍala*) situated in the Uttarāpatha besides Avanti and Kashmir. The confusion is, however, cleared by the Bādal pillar inscription of Nārāyaṇapāla, which is very specific on this point, *i.e.*, Devapāla defeated or held in check the Utkalas, the Hūṇas, the Draviḍas and the Gurjaras. The record further adds that the credit for the success that attended Devapāla's relations with the Hūṇas and others goes to Kedāra Miśra (son of Someśvara) who was the counsellor of the lord of Gauḍa, although we have no such indication in the epigraphic records of Devapāla himself, such as the Monghyr copper-plate of the year 33, the Nālandā copper-plate of the year 39 and the Garuḍa pillar inscription. It is, however, to be noted that verse 32 of the Nālandā plate is a mere repitition of verse 35 of the Monghyr plate which was inscribed earlier, but the Garuḍa-pillar and Bādal pillar inscriptions give more detailed description of his victories and "leave no scope for conjecture that the references are to men of different provinces who were in attendance on the king in their personal capacity and not as representing the kings of those countries as they were not diplomatic representatives, but only attendants (*sevakas*)."[1] But, the records, noticed above, when read together with other contemporary records, make it clear that Devapāla undertook extensive military campaigns to distant lands with a view to realising his high ambition of becoming an all India monarch which he nodoubt partially succeeded in achieving. The terms *sevakādin* and *pādapadmopajīvinaḥ* (*svapadopajīvinaḥ*) refer to the inglorious status of the vanquished to which they were subsequently reduced.

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[1] Verse 13.

The Hūṇas again find mention in the Bangarh grant[2] of Mahīpāla I which reproduces the same conventional passage that we have in the Nālandā plate of Dharmapāla, the Monghyr and Nālandā records of Devapāla, the Bhagalpur copper-plate grant[3] of Nārāyaṇapāla (line 36) and the Bangāon copper-plate[4] of Vigrahapāla III (line 30) as well as other records of their successors. The passage in question refers to the Gauḍas, the Mālavas, the Khaśas, the Hūṇas, the Kulikas, the Karṇāṭas etc. as the servants of the king (*sevakādin*). It is to be found in all the subsequent grants of the dynasty. Inspite of these references, it must, however, be admitted that there is no history available of a direct hostility between Mahīpāla and these powers which renders it impossible to determine the exact charactcr of the struggle in which the Pāla king was involved. There seems to have been no conflict : the Hūṇas probably continued their allegiance to the Pālas since the days of Devapāla, the extirpator of the

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[1] *JUPHS*, v (NS.), pt. ii, p. 5.

[2] *EI*, xv, p. 327.

[3] *Inscriptions of Bihar*, pp. 58–64.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 83–90.

Hūṇa pride, as the term *sevakādin* would suggest. Further, the Hūṇas, referred to in the Pāla records, belonged to the *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* mentioned in grant B of the Gaonri plates, noted in the following pages.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE PARAMĀRAS

The struggle of the Hūṇas with the Paramāras (c. 800–1305 A. D.) constitutes one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of the later Hūṇas. It was not a temporary phase : on the other hand it was a protracted bloody affair resulting in indiscriminate deaths and devastation which finds frequent mention in the contemporary literary accounts as well as epigraphic records. Their vain attempts to revive past glory and fortunes often plunged them into headlong clash with the Indian powers who frowned upon the erstwhile freebooters with ruthless accuracy and determination. It was this misfired adventure on their part that was singularly responsible for the terrible ruination of their territories or *maṇḍala* by the Paramāras who slaughtered and plundered them on many an occasion.

The story of this sanguinary warfare between the Paramāras and the Hūṇas begins with the invasion of the Hūṇa territory by Sīyaka II who is said to have launched a military campaign against them, slaughtered the princes and "turned their harems into the dwelling-places for the consecration of widowhood."[1] What actually prompted the Paramāra king to turn against the Hūṇas and to overrun their territory so relentlessly is not known, but the nature of the description of his exploits in *Navasāhasāṅka-carita* leaves no room for doubt that the invasion was occasioned due to the aggressive attiude and activities of the vanquished themselves, resulting in terrible depradations on either side. Even two hundred years after the departure of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula from the political scene of India and the tragic dismemberment of the Hūṇa empire into tiny isolated pockets (*maṇḍalas*) the Hūṇas were unable to reconcile themselves to the changed times that were running badly over them. Infact, they dreamt of the time that was never to return and hopelessly clung to the outdated idea of rehabilitating themselves which was never to materialise. Their inability to cheerfully adjust to the new changing circumstances and their foolish desire to work against the forces of history lay mainly at the root of the numerous uncalled for hostilities between the Hūṇas and the Paramāras as well as other powers of the day.

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[1] *Navasāhasāṅka-carita*, xi, verse 90 :

"अकङ्कनम् अकेयूयम् अनूपुरम् अमेखलम्
हूणावरोधं वैधव्य-दीक्षा-दानं व्यधत्त यः"

Who was the Hūṇa prince and where did his territory (*maṇḍala*) lie ? Unfortunately the identity of the chief as well as the exact location of the territory is yet undetermined. D. C. Ganguly [1] suggests that the *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* mentioned in the *Navasāhasāṅka-carita*, was situated to the north-west of Mālwā and the Hūṇa chief defeated by Sīyaka II was a successor of Jājjapa who was defeated and killed by Balavarman, the father of Yogarāja of Saurāṣṭra. [2] The objection that, "as Balavarman was a Pratihāra feudatory and could be sent to fight against the enemies of the Pratihāra empire in any part of the country, it is difficult to identify the Hūṇa chief or his principality on the basis of this reference" [3] does not seem to rest on solid grounds as the Una plate of Mahendrapāla Pratihāra is quite clear on this point. It referes to two Hūṇa kings or chiefs—Viśada and Jājjapa—by name who are said to have been killed by Balavarman. There is thus no doubt that Balavarman fought against the Hūṇas, no matter in what capacity and how and where he was sent to lead the Pratihāra forces. The Pratihāras during this time (899–900 A. D.) were one of the foremost powers in northern India whose loyal and powerful feudatory Balavarman is credited with having successfully conducted many a warfare on behalf of his master, and brought glory and fortunes to the Pratihāra empire by defeating and subjugating kings far and wide.

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[1] *History of the Paramāra Dynasty* (Dacca, 1933), p. 40.

[2] *EI*. i, p. 134, verse 45; ix, pp. 8, 17.

[3] (Miss) Pratipal Bhatia, *The Paramarās* (*c. 800–1305 A. D.*) [*MS.*]—a thesis approved by the Delhi University, 1963, pp. 54–56.

The *Navasāhasāṅka-carita* and Gaonri plates make it clear that the Paramāras fought against the Hūṇas, and Sīyaka II and his successors destroyed and later subjugated their territory. As the Una plate of Mahendrapāla is dated Vikrama saṁvat 956 or 899 A. D., it may well be presumed that the successor of Jājjapa was a contemporary of Sīyaka II who came to the Paramāra throne before 949. A. D. In view of these unimpeachable evidences it is futile to suggest that "it may as well be or may not be" the Hūṇa principality "against which the Paramāras as well as the Cedis came into hostile contact." [1]

As to the locality of the Hūṇas which Sīyaka II is said to have destroyed, we are not on firm grounds. From the various references in early mediaeval Indian literature and inscriptions we learn that there were more than one Hūṇa principalities (*Hūṇa-maṇḍa*) in India during this period. The *Harṣacarita* [2] records one such principality in north-western India, whereas Padmagupta mentions another in his *Navasāhasāṅka-carita* [3] whose chief is said to have clashed with Sīyaka II who caused horrible depradations to this tribe and "turned their harems into a dwelling place for the widows." The various Paramāra inscriptions also speak of the subjugation of the Hūṇa principality and of the defeat of the Hūṇa chiefs at the hands of Sīyaka II, and his sons Vākpati II and Sindhurāja, which obviously is the same as referred to in the *Navasāhasāṅka-carita.* There is no doubt that the Hūṇa territory could not have been far away from the territory of the Paramāras and on the basis of the Gaonri plates of Vākpati II [4] it may safely be suggested that it was in Central India, somewhere to the south-east of the Paramāra kingdom.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Harṣacarita*, chap. v.

[3] xi, verses 89–90.

[4] *EI*. xxiii, p. 101 ff, Plate B, lines 7–8 : "…यथा हूणमण्डले आवरकभोगसम्वद्ध……वणिका ग्रामे…"

Further, it is not unlikely that Vaṇikā or Vaṇikāgrāma in the *Āvaraka-Bhoga,* situated in *Hūṇa-maṇḍala,*[2] mentioned in Plate B, was not far from Gaonri (near Indore), and the grant was made not long after the defeat of the Hūṇas and the annexation of their territory, probably by Sīyaka II or his son Vākpati II. The *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* of the first Plate evidently refers to the country ruled over by the Hūṇas in Mālwā, *i.e.,* the northern part of the Mālwā plateau. It was distinct from Avanti, though contiguous to it. Rājaśekhara suggests that Māhiṣmatī was the capital of the Kalacuri family. The Hūṇa country was to the north of Ujjain, though it is difficult to define its exact boundaries which must have varied in different periods.[3] The suggested location is also confirmed by references to the Hūṇa in a Cedi inscription which says that king Karṇa married the Hūṇa princess Avhalladevī or Avalladevī at about this time (A. D. 945–72).[4] It is also suggested that the Hūṇa principality may have been "a buffer State between the Paramāra and the Cedi territories"[5] and in that case the *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* has to be put somewhere in Hoshangabad or Vindhyan areas adjacent to Mhow and probably to the north of the river Narmadā.[6]

The Hūṇas once again were involved in violent conflict with the Paramāras during the time of Vākpati II (A. D. 974–97) or Vākpati Muñja (or Utpalarāja or Muñjarāja), the son and successor of Sīyaka II. It appears that despite their crushing defeat during the previous regime, they could not be subdued for long and Vākpati had to wage war against them. The latter led an expedition against them and won a complete victory. The Kauthem grant [1] of Vikramāditya V describes Vākpati as the destroyer of the Hūṇas. The Gaonri inscription of Vākpati refers to the grant of a village, Vaṇikā in *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* to a Brāhmaṇa, [2] which shows that the annexation of the Hūṇa territory to the Paramāra kingdom was already affected by this time. But the very fact that Sindhurāja (c. 997–1010 A. D.), the younger brother of Vākpatirāja, had again to fight against the Hūṇas unmistakably suggests that Vākpati's success over them was not decisive but of purely temporary nature.

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[1] P. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–56.

[2] *EI.* xxiii, p. 108, lines 7–8.

[3] *JUPHS,* v (NS), pt. ii, p. 5.

[4] *CII.* iv, Intro. cii–clxv.

[5] P. Bhatia, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–56.

[6] For further details see *EI.* xxiii, p. 102; i, p. 223; *IA.* xvi, p. 156.

Sindhurāja tried to carry out the military policy of his predecessors in the north and consequently his first blow fell on the Hūṇas. The Udaipur praśasti [3] and the *Navasāhasāṅka-carita,* [4] giving a graphic description of the battle, record his decisive victory over them. Thus the war with the Hūṇas that began in the time of Sīyaka II and continued in the reign-period of Vākpati II, was brought to a successful end during the time of Sindhurāja, and the Hūṇa territory was finally assimilated into the Paramāra kingdom. Towards the end of the eleventh century the Hūṇas no more constituted a political menace and we do not hear of Paramāra-Hūṇa-conflict after the reign of Sindhurāja.

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[1] *IA.*, xvi, p. 23, lines 41–42 :
"हूण-प्राण-हर-प्रताप-दहनो यात्रा-त्रसन-मारव-
श्चैद्य-च्छेदि अखिल-क्षमा-जय-नय-व्युत्पन्नाधीर्उत्पलः" Also see *IA*, viii, p. 11; *EI*, xii, p. 276; D. C. Ganguly, *op. cit.* p. 53; P. Bhatia, *op. cit.* pp. 70–71.

[2] *EI*, xxiii, p. 102, lines 7–8.

[3] *EI*, i, p. 235, verse 16 : "तस्यानुजो निर्ज्जित-हूणराजः श्री सिंधुराजो विजयार्ज्जितश्रीः…"

[4] *Navasāhasāṅka-carita*, x, verse 14 :

"अपकर्तुं अत्र समये तवात्त-भी-
र्मनसापि हूण-नृपतिर्न वान्छति ।
इभ-कुम्भ-भित्ति-दलनोद्यमे हरे-
र्न कपिः कदाचन सटां विकर्षति ॥"

THE HŪṆAS AND THE KALACURIS

We have an interesting account of the relations between the Hūṇas and the Kalacuris. In atleast three epigraphic records their political and marital relations are graphically described which shows that their attachment was much deeper. Moreover, their territories were also close to each other. According to Rājaśekhara [1] their capital was at Māhiṣmatī, contiguous to the *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* lying to the north of Ujjain.

The Bherāghāṭ-Jubbulpore inscription [2] of the Kalacuri queen Alhaṇadevī (widow of Gayākarṇadeva, of the time of her son, Narasiṁhadeva) represents king Karṇa as having subdued and held in check the Pāṇḍyas, the Muralas, the Kuṅgas, the Vaṅgas, the Kaliṅgas and the Hūṇas. It is said that "when the king with his unprecedented lustre gave free play to his heroism, the Pāṇḍya relinquished violence, the Murala gave up his arrogant bearing, the Kuṅga entered the path of the good, the Vaṅga trembled with the Kaliṅga, the Kīra stayed at home like a parrot in the cage, and the Hūṇa left off being merry." [3] The Karaṇabela inscription [4] says that Karṇa was waited upon by the rulers of Hūṇa, Gurjara and Kīra territories. From these expressions it is very difficult to infer that there was an actual fighting between the Hūṇas and the Kalacuris, though it can safely be surmised that the former dared not raise their rebellious heads against the powerful Kalacuri king. Their relation, instead of being strained and hostile, seems to have been cordial as the expression "the Hūṇa left off being merry" indicates. Moreover, this happy-go attitude was probably the result of the marital relations between the two as the grand mother of king Karṇa was a Hūṇa princess.

The other two records also confirm this assumption. The Khairh (Rewa) plates of king Yaśaḥkarṇadeva, [5] dated in the Kalacuri year 823 (= 1072 A. D.) say that king Lakṣmīkarṇa, father of Yaśaḥkarṇa, was married to the Hūṇa princess Āvalladevī. This alliance was important as king Karṇadeva is said to have abdicated his throne in favour of his son Yaśaḥkarṇa, from this union. This is further corroborated by the Jubbulpore (now Nagpur Museum) plate of the same ruler (Kalacuri year 829 = 1078 A. D.). These marital relations gave the Hūṇas a prominent place in the society which had so long treated them as barbarous foreigners with no cultural standing. Politically they were now a negligible factor deserving no serious notice, but culturally they made great strides and soon came to be recognised in popular parlance as one of the many clans of the Kṣatriyas and respected as such in the social hierarchy.

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[1] *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, p. 67 : "माहिष्मतीं कल्चुरेः कुलराजधानीम्"

[2] (now) American Oriental Society inscription—*EI*. ii, p. 9.

[3] *JUPHS*, v (NS.), p. 3.

[4] *IA*. xviii, p. 217.

[5] *EI*. xii, p. 210 ff.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE GUHILAS

The relation between the Hūṇas and the Guhilas was somewhat of cultural nature which is mentioned in the Aṭpur inscription from Udaipur [1] (Rajaputana) of Guhila Śaktikumāra dated VS. 1034 (977 A. D.). The record says that king Allaṭa of Guhila family married Hariyādevī, daughter of a Hūṇa king who is not named (951-53 A. D.). Their son married a Cauhāna princess of Jejaya. The interesting aspect of this union is that the founder of the Guhila family was a Brāhmaṇa, Guhadatta who originally came from Ānandapura (in the Lāṭa province). As we have no other record to enlighten us on the relation—political and cultural—of the Guhilas with the Hūṇas, it is difficult to determine their political relation. The nature of description, as contained in the above record, shows that unlike other powers, they were never on the warpath : on the otherhand they were united together through matrimonial alliances.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE CĀLUKYAS

There are atleast three inscriptions [2] which refer to *Hūṇaprū-*

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[1] Cf. Bhandarkar's List, No. 35.

[2] Kauthem Ins. 41 ; Miraj Ins., 41 and Yeyur Ins. 50.

ṇahara-pratāpa-dahano—an expression which gained proverbial character as a result of the utter defeat of the Hūṇas at the hands of the Western Cālukyas of Gujarat. It is said that Durlabharāja, when on his way back to his country after a successful military expedition, was attacked by the combined forces of the chiefs of Mālwā, Mathurā and Hūṇa country. They were thoroughly defeated and the Rājā of Hūṇadeśa, along with others, took to flight, and the king marched to his capital truimphantly with his newly won bride. This is further corroborated by a reference in the *Devyāśraya kāvya* [1] of Hemacandra which enumerates in the list of princes, who encountered Durlabharāja, a king of *Hūṇadeśa* which undoubtedly represented the Hūṇa country or *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* of the inscriptions. This instance apart, we have no other evidence to show that the Hūṇas ever involved themselves in bloody encounters with the Western Cālukyas on any other occasion.

THE HŪṆAS IN KASHMIR

The Hūṇas continued to dominate and influence the history of Kashmir for more than a century, *i.e.*, from the beginning of the fifth century A. D. to the end of the sixth century A. D. Mihirakula, after his rout by Yaśodharman, retreated to Kashmir and ruled there for sometime which is also attested by Sung-Yun (A. D. 520) who reached Transoxiana and found the Ephthalite king seated on a golden throne in his left tent, accepting gifts and presents brought to him from forty countries which his armies had conquered in a number of invasions. This leads us to conclude that the whole of Gandhāra and Kashmir had been under the Hūṇa domination where the strong rule of that monarch was felt throughout.

Mihirakula's rule in Kashmir was continued by other Hūṇa rulers whose names sometimes disclose foreign identity. But the history of the rule of these later Hūṇas in Kashmir is so obscure and baffling that it is difficult to enumerate their reign-period or activities except to recount their names of which atleast a dozen is known to us from the coins and

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[1] xvii, p. 547 ff.

Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. We have unfortunately no epigraphic records to enlighten us on this obscure period of the history of Kashmir. The debased copper currency of the period and after, supplies, as usual, a list of the names of the Hūṇa princes some of which have been vaguely identified with those given by Kalhaṇa, but most of them still remain a mystery, and no other sources offer any clue to the identification of these princes and their chronological order. Kalhaṇa's account for the early part is quite vague and confusing, often misleading, though for the later part it may be treated as authentic and reliable. In the given circumstances, it is difficult to present an authentic and reliable picture of the period under review.

The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* says that after Mihirakula, the political scene of Kashmir was dominated by Hiraṇyakula, Vasukula and Toramāṇa, evidently Hinduised Hūṇa princes. According to Kalhaṇa, Vasukula was succeeded by Mihirakula who was noted for cruelty and ruthlessness. He is said to have massacred innumerable persons and inflicted a crushing defeat on the king of Ceylon. The chronicler also enumerates his Śaivite leanings and some of his supernatural deeds. He was followed by Deva Ṣāhi Khiṅgila,[1] known from the coins, who is identified with Khiṅkhila mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* as one of the kings who succeeded Mihirakula. He is also said to have been known by the Hindu title of *Narendrāditya*. We have shown elsewhere that the copper coins of the period with the legend *jayati Śrī Narendra* also exist and may not have been issued by the same chief as suggested by Cunningham. This *Śrī Narendra* seems to be distinct from Khiṅgila Narendrāditya who is also identified with Lakhana Harendrāditya of Kalhaṇa who probably ruled after 550 A. D. Similar coins of Rājā Lakhana Udayāditya from the Punjab,[2] are also known. A king of that name belonging to the Hūṇa stock is also mentioned by Kalhaṇa but his *viruda* was Narendrāditya and not Udayāditya as known from the Punjab coins. Cunningham identified Lakhana Narendrāditya with Udayāditya who struck coins of the Ephthalite Hūṇa type, *i.e.*, Toramāṇa type.[1]

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[1] *Infra*, chap. vii; *JASB*, 1894, p. 189.

[2] *JASB*, 1894, p. 189; *JNSI*, ix, pt. i, p. 15.

Then followed Toramāṇa (of the Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir) whose identity is very much disputed by scholars. Kalhaṇa mentions him as an altogether different personality from the well known Toramāṇa, the Hūṇa monarch, and asserts that he was a pretender to the Kashmir throne, never a king, and died in prison where he was put by his brother for striking the coins which we now possess. Evidently the statement is full of contradictions which we have discussed in detail elsewhere in our dissertation.[2]

The son of this Toramāṇa was Pravarasena whose coins both in gold and silver of the Kidārite type have been found.[3] Kalhaṇa always describes him as a great conqueror who re-established Śilāditya the expelled son of the king of Mālwā, on his throne. He is said to have flourished in 580 A.D. His identity is also problematic and the history of India knows of no such great conqueror as Pravarasena.[4] Evidently Kalhaṇa has worked on mere hearsay and confused the whole issue.

The history of the Hūṇas of Kashmir after this period is all the more obscure and they appear to have been replaced by the Karkoṭas who came to rule over Kashmir in the beginning of the seventh century A. D. and struck coins of their own, though on the pattern of the Toramāṇa type itself. In addition to the copper money they also struck coins of mixed metal which contained gold, silver and copper in different proportions. This mixed metal of the Karkoṭa coinage is generally known as electrum.

THE HŪṆAS AND OTHER POWERS

Inspite of the great vicissitudes in their fortunes, the Hūṇa power continued to exist till the early part of the thirteenth century A. D. The Chebrolu inscription of Jaya,[1] dated Śaka saṁvat 1153 (= A. D. 1231), inscribed on two pillars infront of the *gopura* of the Nāgeśvara temple at Chebrolu in the Bapatlatāluka of the Krishna district, gives an interesting account of the relation between the Hūṇas and the southern king. It refers to the Mādra king, the Pañcola, the Videha king, Hammīra, the Hūṇa, and the king of Kāśī waiting at his door. The exact relation between the two powers can not be determined on the basis of this record, but there is no doubt that Hammīra, the Hūṇa, might have been in the service of this king either as a Hūṇa chief or in his individual capacity. The Ajmer *Harikelināṭaka* inscription of the Cauhānas dated Vikrama saṁvat 1210 (= 1153 A. D.),[2] otherwise known as Ajmer slab inscription, also refers to their political and social status. A late inscription of Vikrama saṁvat 1545 (= 1488 A. D.), known as the Udaipur inscription of the time of Guhila Rājamalla[3] speaks of Arisiṁha as having given up his life in the protection of Citrakūṭa (Chittor) against the Pāraśikas, graphically mentioned in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*[4] which narrates an interesting story of king Udayana who, having subdued the king of Sind at the head of the cavalry, destroyed the *mlecchas* just as Rāma had destroyed the rākṣasas; the cavalry of the Turuṣka was broken; he cut off the head of the king of Pāraśikas, as Viṣṇu did of Rāhu and dealt the final blow to the Hūṇas who were defeated. Whatever the historical value of this story, it demonstrates the grouping of these powers situated in close proximity to each other.[5] The Pāraśikas, also mentioned by Kālidāsa in his *Raghuvaṁśa*, were at this time living somewhere in Rajputana, close to Sind and nearer to the Hūṇa territory or the *Hūṇa-maṇḍala* mentioned in the Gaonri plates.

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[1] *Later Indo-Scythians*, pp. 97, 111.

[2] *Infra.*, chap. vii.

[3] S. C. Ray, *JNSI*, xviii, p. 73.

[4] For other details see *Infra.*, chap. vii.

As has been shown above the *Harṣacarita* also places the

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[1] *EI*. iii, p. 149.

[2] *IA*. xx, p. 210 ff.

[3] *Bhandarkar's List* No. 862.

[4] ii. 94 (Penzers edn.).

[5] *JUPHS*, v (NS.), p. 5.

Hūṇa kingdom in the Punjab region. The *Kānhaḍeprabandha* of Padmanābha of the fifteenth century A.D. describes Kānhaḍe as the master of Jalor and many of the crown-lands. He was served by the chiefs of the Solaṅkīs, Vāghelās, Rāṭhors, Cāvaḍās, Hūṇas, Yādavas, Paramāras, and Guhilas having big *jāgīrs* in his State. The Hūṇas thus lived grandly with the best of arms and armours.[1] These stray references in early-mediaeval and mediaeval records suggest that like most other powers the Hūṇas by this time had lost their kingly power and status and were more or less reduced to the status of petty *jāgīrdārs* and Zamindars. Nevertheless they yet formed an important element of Indian population, serving on *jāgīrs* and constituting powerful bands of brave soldiers who could be easily relied upon in warfare.

It is true, they were during the early part of the sixteenth century assimilated in Indian society and treated as one of the Kṣatriya clans but they had not completely lost their identity, and were remembered by the writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly the Jainas. They survived in tradition, and posterity remembered them because of their erstwhile barbarian nature and ferocious characteristics of their race which has no parallel in Indian history although much of the traits of their racial character had by this time undergone tremendous transformation. The memory of Mihirakula's tyranny was very much alive in the twelfth century A. D. when Kalhaṇa wrote his accounts of Kashmir (*Rājataraṅgiṇī*). Even as late as 1600 A. D. a South Indian Brāhmaṇa writer equated the Portuguese with the Hūṇas, who were described as "very despicable, devoid of tenderness, regardless of Brāhmaṇas and careless of all ceremonial purity."[2] The *Śaktisaṁgama-tantra*[3] (a late work of the seventeentheighteenth century), which contains an account of fifty-six countries, traditionally refers to them along with a number of peoples. The Indian literature has thus throughout preserved their memory in some form or other and the greatest Indian poet of modern times has not forgotten them as one such foreigner who came, who saw and who conquered but was ultimately assimilated into Indian society [1] losing completely his identity and culture whatever.

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[1] Dasarath Sharma in *JIH*, xxxviii, p. 106.

[2] M. Stephens, *Albuquerque*, p. 206.

[3] Cf. the following :

मलाट्श्चैव पानाटाः पावाधान्धक (?) पुलिन्दकः (काः)
हु (हू) ण कौरवगान्धारविदर्भाः सविदेहका (काः)

* * * *

"कामगिरेर्दक्षभागे मरूदेशात्तथोत्तरे
हूणदेशः समाख्यातः शूरास्तत्र वसन्ति हि" (*Ṣaṭpañcāsaddeśa Vibhāgaḥ*)

EFFECTS OF HŪṆA INVASION

The Hūṇa invasion produced tremendous effects on the life of the Indian people. The Hūṇas blazed forth like devastating fire and consumed everything before them for the time being. The classical age lost its vitality and the tottering Gupta empire received its fatal blow, too hard to survive. Their tyrannical rule passed for legendary tales which find echo in Indian tradition and literature all through the ages. The mention of the term *Hūṇa* for the first time in the Mandasor epigraphs of the first quarter of the sixth century A. D. speaks of the considerable political power they wielded in the area and the adjoining regions. They ruled over northern and north-western India hardly for about a century but that was sufficient to disturb the political equilibrium and stability that the Guptas had succeeded in achieving through centuries of ceaseless efforts and struggles. The rule of sword that the Hūṇas had established left behind it the trail of bitterness and fissiparous tendencies which violently shattered the political set-up of the country and the north-western provinces of the mighty Guptas were thoroughly weakened and exposed as is unmistakably proved by the records discovered at Bhitari, Kurā, Gwalior and Eraṇ as well as the writings of the Chinese pilgrims. Masters of a considerable portion of India, the Hūṇas, when they were forced to retire to their original headquarters, caused incalculable damage to the cause of political unity and economic security which could not be retrieved in the succeeding ages by any of the Indian monarchs, inspite of their sincere efforts and sacrifices.

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2. Cf. Rabindranath Tagore's famous national anthem.

The meteoric rise and disappearance of the Hūṇas threw the country in utter doldrums and a state of lawlessness and anarchy gripped the areas held by them. Even before the rise of Yaśodharman, Mandasor and the outlying territories were passing through a state of confusion caused by repeated invasions from outside. The first wave of Hūṇa invasion, though repelled and crushed by Skandagupta, let loose centrifugal forces all around and the Gupta monarch had difficult times to effectively cope with the new situation. Though he could maintain intact the territorial integrity of the empire in his time, certain outlying provinces were lost immediately after his death, to the ambitious chiefs who had now nothing to fear. The process of disintegration had set in, and this was accelerated by the second wave of Hūṇa invasion under their great leader and general Toramāṇa. This invasion was followed by a period of trouble and confusion all over north-western India during which Hariṣeṇa Vākāṭaka invaded Mālwā and wrested the distracted province temporarily. This was really a dangerous blow to the bleeding Gupta empire.[1] Hariṣeṇa was later defeated by Yaśodharman and Mālwā passed under his direct control. Similar condition obtained in all the provinces which the Hūṇas had conquered and subdued.

After the expulsion of the Hūṇas the Gupta empire remained but a carcass of its former self which was literally buried fathoms deep by the middle of the sixth century A. D. It was now confined only to Magadha and parts of north Bengal. Thus, with the weakening of the imperial authority all that the Guptas had done for Indian unity by bringing the greater part of the country under one umbrella and by establishing a uniform system of Government was gone. With their exit from the scene, Indian history once again lost its unity and stability and the command of one single political authority was no longer obeyed from north to south and from east to west. Hoardes of outlanders poured through north-western gates of the country and established aggressive monarchies in Gandhāra, western Mālwā and the neighbouring regions. The Punjab was permanently siezed by the Hūṇas and the Deccan by local dynasts. The political connection of the Madhyadeśa (the Middle country) with the valleys of the Indus and Godāvarī was snapped and the splendour of the Gupta metropolis was dimmed by the rising glory of the house of Yaśodharman and the Vardhanas of Kanauj and other dynasties. The task of maintaining imperial integrity was too hard to achieve : petty independent principalities had sprung up all around and the country had once again reached the point of pre-Mauryan ascendancy from which there was now no going back.

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[1] *VGA.* p. 186.

The invasion further dealt a death-blow to the none-too-prosperous Indian republicanism which till then survived like an oasis in the vast imperial desert. The Hūṇa invasion engulfed the heroic Mālavas, they were wiped off the map of India, and by the middle of the fifth century A. D. republics disappeared from the Indian scene. The Yaudheyas along with the Kunindas, the Ambaṣṭhas and others vanished in the air and from this time onward Indian history melts into "brillliant biographies—isolated gems without a common string of national and common life." [1] The community practically ceased to breathe freedom, and the old glory never returned.

The older martial tribes of Rajasthan also received a serious set-back resulting from this invasion. Their centuries old structure was almost destroyed and their place was taken by the new comers who were acclimatised invaders from whom the Mirs of Rajasthan are said to have sprung up. The caste-ridden Hindu social system was shaken to its foundation and the invasion brought in its wake very many changes in the existing set-up. It is true, they introduced no innovations in the field of established Hindu administrative system and slavishly copied the old pattern, but their permanent settlement in the country and their matrimonial alliances with royal families and other castes naturally produced results of far-reaching consequences. Their children could no longer be treated as barbarians and they constituted an inseparable part of the Indian population.

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[1] Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 164.

Their fastidious way of living was further responsible for new influences in other spheres of the society. It is generally contended by scholars like Tod, V. A. Smith, D.R. Bhandarkar, William Crooke and others that the advent of the Hūṇas on the Indian scene disturbed the old Hindu institutions and polity much more seriously than would be evident from the perusal of the Purāṇas and other ancient literary texts, which, brought about a re-arrangement of both castes and ruling families in the country. Some scholars (Tod and others), go so far as to suggest that the Rajput clans in India originated from the Hūṇas which is not correct as we have shown in the following chapter. It can, however, be suggested that the indigenous Kṣatriyas, and in certain cases Brāhmaṇas, of the land gradually mixed up with the foreign Hūṇa hoardes through matrimonial alliances whose offsprings were accorded an inferior status in the Rajput hierarchy. We do not know when exactly this confusion began, but there is no doubt that the process had already started towards the beginning of the seventh century A. D. and by the end of the fourteenth century this new fusion of races came to stay as a political and social factor with no serious differences to be seen any more.

Economically speaking, the invasion erupted some dangerous signs of decay. The economic life of the people was thoroughly shattered and the Central exchequer suddenly went bankrupt. The stringent financial condition of the period is reflected, though indirectly, in some of the epigraphic records of Skandagupta and the later Gupta kings as well as the debased gold currency issued by the former. The most remarkable aspect of this feature is to be seen in the later Gupta coinage which is mostly either in silver or in copper. The brilliant tradition of numismatic art in gold was sharply on decline and was finally given up only a few years after the death of Skandagupta. The ruthless destruction of the cities and the indiscriminate plunder of the Buddhist monasteries, the repositories of culture and immense wealth, accelerated the pace of economic deterioration all the more. The inhuman persecution of the village-folk resulting in their massacre and wholesale migrations and the ruination of the fertile lands in the course of the terrific march of the hostile forces left the country side barren and desolate which dangerously told upon agriculture hastening the collapse of the already tottering economic structure of the country.

The disturbing raids of the Hūṇas over peaceful trade-routes of Central Asia about the end of the fourth century A. D. and the rise of the Sassanian dynasty of Persia which brought some parts of north-west India under their control affected the normal activities of trade and commerce with Central Asian territories reacting adversely on the base gold coins of the Kidāra Kuṣāṇas. The rise of the Hūṇas, their conquest of parts of Central Asia and invasion of India and, lastly occupation of Kashmir further worsened the economic condition of the valley as well as parts of the country which they subsequently came to occupy and rule. The overland trade-routes were disturbed and ultimately closed down. Thus Kashmir became an impoverished country and the gold and base coins of the Kuṣāṇas and Kidāra Kuṣāṇas went out of circulation and were ultimately replaced by the debased copper pieces all over the areas struck by the Hūṇas.[1] The conquerors needed money to boost up their war activities and it was mainly the economic reasons that prompted them to plunder the cities and towns and destroy the monasteries and the *stūpas* to grab their riches. Their tyrannical acts were almost legendary, their naked rule absolutely terrifying and their fastidious and repulsive activities terribly amazing, the memory of which has been vividly preserved in the works of Kalhaṇa and other ancient writers.

The effects of these invasions proved equally disastrous to the cause of learning and art. We have no knowledge of the amount of damage done during the first and second phases of Hūṇa invasion, but the third phase of their invasion under the leadership of Mihirakula witnessed terrible destruction of the citadels of learning and culture which were built up through centuries of ceaseless efforts made by the Indian kings in different periods. Gandhāra was wrecked and plundered, Takṣaśilā was completely sacked, Kāsiā and Kauśāmbī were wantonly destroyed, Nālandā and Pāṭaliputra were partially damaged. Fortunately they escaped wholesale destruction. The Buddhist monasteries and stūpas, the great centres of learning, were reduced to ashes and with them was finished the age-old brilliant tradition of Indian art, the living symbol of a dynamic nation.

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[1] *JNSI.*, xviii, p. 73.

With the centres of culture gone, the country was almost pulverised and the inhabitants demoralised and degraded. The walls still described the old circumference, but the cities had gone to ruins, and some of the noblest monuments which had braved the onslaughts of time were totally left in a desert far remote from the habitations of the mankind. The daily havoc which was perpetrated by the Hūṇas affords a melancholy example; the monuments of antiquity had been left naked of their precious ornaments, and the barbarians usurped in a moment the toil and treasure of successive ages. The solid edifices lay prostrate, naked and broken, like the limbs of a mighty giant, but the stupendous relics have survived the injuries of time and fortune.

CHAPTER VII

THE HŪṆAS AND THE INDIAN CULTURE

The early Hūṇas may rightly be described as "a nation of hunters and shepherds."[1] It is generally believed that their linguistic and racial position remained relatively unchanged all through these centuries, but their barbarian character underwent tremendous transformation in course of their rapid spread and growing contact with the peoples of those parts of the world—the West as well as the East—with whom they fiercely clashed and whom they came to dominate for a number of years. They carried fire and fury wherever they went and established their undoubted political supremacy by virtue of their indomitable fighting genius but were culturally subdued as they had no distinct cultural tradition of their own. And, whatever culture they had, was too inferior to prove a match for the superior cultures which finally absorbed them without difficulty. But, these political and cultural clashes were not in vain : they produced some effects of permanent nature on the Indian society as a whole.

THE EARLY HŪṆAS

For long the early Hūṇas were regarded as typical followers of the steppe culture, *i.e.*, as militant horse-nomads, their mode of life being similar to the Scythians and Samaritians of Turkistan.[2] Some even believed that the Hūṇas and other Turanian peoples were the originators of this culture, but recent researches have proved these views to be erroneous.[3] The references in the Chinese annals about these 'northern barbarians' (called *di*) show that as late as the sixth century B. C., the early inhabitants of Mongolia were just foot-nomads and were far from being the superb cavalrymen of later days. Like the early Finns, they were hunters and food-gatherers, and also probably practised a rude system of agriculture. But, in any case, it seems certain that the horse-culture revolutionised their life, only after 300 B. C.

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[1] E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii, p. 244.

[2] McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 99.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

The archaeological discoveries made by Kozlov in northern Mongolia in recent years have thrown some interesting light on the mode of the life of the early Hūṇas. In some of the tombs of the Hūṇa chieftains, various art objects were found with decorations, quite identical with designs common among the Iranian nomads in Turkistan and Southern Russia. Besides these, other objects were also found which betray unmistakable Greek influences, probably "brought across Central Asia from the Greek colonies established along the northern coast of the Black Sea." [1]

From the Chinese accounts it is obvious that all the peoples under the Hūṇa domination in that area had a fairly homogenous culture, corresponding closely to that of the Iranian nomads of the west. We are told that they had no walled cities or fixed residences and were constantly moving from one place to another in search of pure pasturage for their cattle. They lived in tents made of felt which assumed the form of the yurt or dome-shaped tent, so characteristic of the Turkish and Mongolian peoples of later times.

We get some idea about the clothing of the early Hūṇas from the Chinese chronicles which state that, like their furniture, it consisted of skins and felt, *i.e.*, they were either ignorant of the art of weaving or made no use of it at all. In later period, however, their dress and ornaments included a pair of full trousers, tightly strapped around the anklets; leather boots and often a short cape made of fur over the leather robe; a fur cap or hat usually covering the head, earrings etc. It was customary with these warrior nomads to have much of the hair shaved off, but to leave a tuft of hair on the top of the head and two short braided tresses, on behind each ear, like the later Chinese pigtail.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Though a sort of food-gatherers, they themselves engaged in no agricultural pursuits and lived exclusively from flesh and milk, for which they hunted wild beasts and birds as well as killed the domesticated animals like horses, sheep and cattle. *Kumis* or fermented mare's milk was already customary among all the Hunnish peoples.

In ancient Chinese annals there is complete absence of any reference to pottery-making or of metallurgy among the Hūṇas, and as such it was argued for long that they were quite ignorant of both these arts. But archaeological excavations have conclusively shown that a crude unglazed pottery (but ornamented for the most part, with geometrical designs) was made in different parts of Mongolia during the hey-day of the Hunnish empire. We further get a clear picture of the working of metals among the Hūṇas. Excavations around Minnusinsk in south-western Siberia have shown that in this area atleast, the peoples had attained a high degree of proficiency in the making of copper, bronze and iron objects at a time when they were subjected to Hūṇa invasion and conquest. How far this Siberian metal culture exerted its influence over the inhabitants of Mongolia proper we do not know, but the excavations of the Japanese archaeologists in Eastern Mongolia have thrown some refreshing light on this otherwise difficult problem. On the basis of these finds it can be said that the art of the casting of copper and bronze objects was unknown to the ancient inhabitants of Mongolia and all such objects found in this area were obviously of Chinese origin. But the knowledge of iron working must have been widespread among these Turanian peoples, *viz.* the arrow-heads, the swords, and other weapons used by the Hūṇas must have been of indigenous workmanship. [1]

The recent excavations by Russian archaeologists on some of the sites in this area have thrown further light on different aspects of Hūṇa culture. Excavations at Ilmovoi Padi, south of lake Baikal near the Mongolian frontier, have brought to light Hunnish barrows of the second century B. C. These were large square piles of stone, 18 to 20 m. across, formed of blocks of granite almost like cyclopean masonry. [1] Log frame works covered over by a roof and containing plank coffins with burials were also found at a depth of 6 m. In the tombs which had been robbed in antiquity were found the remains of objects, many of them of Chinese origin : silk cloth, small lacquered tea-cups; bronze mirrors, objects of white nephrite, large pots of grey colour with narrow necks, iron bits and weapons (three-finned iron arrowheads and bone clasps from bows). [3] All this obviously shows that a large quantity of imported Chinese objects found their way to the Hūṇas, and thus the extent of Chinese influence is remarkable.

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[1] Torii, "Populations Primitives de la Mongolie Orientale" in *Journal of the College of Science of Tokyo University*, 1914, p. 11, 49, 69 ff; Merhardt, *Bronzezeit*, p. 16.

Of the few settlements of the Hunnish period that are known a hill-fort near the outlet of the lower Ivolga 14 km. south-west of Ulan-Ude (near the south-east shore of Lake Baikal) was excavated in 1949–50. It is surrounded by a defensive belt of four banks and four ditches the inside area of which measures 348 by 208 m. and the remains of several dozen huts excavated into the ground and with channels of stones in the walls for heating were found. Traces of metal-working (slag), weapons, pottery and so on were found. Bones of domestic animals, querns and storage-pits are evidence that besides stock-rearing, which was the basis of the Hūṇa economy, agriculture also came to be practised, probably by conquered tribes and also by Chinese captives. The consistent researches of Soviet archaeologists in recent years have now made it possible to unfold the history of the economy and life of the nomadic Hūṇas whose raids of pillage played such a destructive part in the history of the peoples of Asia and Europe. These researches have conclusively demonstrated the fact that culturally the Hūṇas were much more retarded than the peoples they conquered with the result that in the long run they fell under the cultural domination of the latter. [2]

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1. A.L. Mongaït, *Archaeology in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 176 (Penguin series).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

Apart from cattle-rearing the chief occupation of the Hūṇas was war. The training of the youths in martial exercises began at a very early age, say while still babies, and as soon as they were able "to span a full-sized bow, the boys were admitted into the rank of the warriors." They generally undertook their raids of pillage when the moon was waxing and lay quiet when it was waning. They were not obsessed with any war-morale : they could retreat without any sense of sorrow or shame before superior members, and could launch lightening counter-offensive when the enemy-army had demobilised. Their principal weapon of destruction was bow and arrow, shot from horse-backs, though they also used spears and swords in hand-to-hand fighting. In India also, they made use of these weapons, some specimens of which have come to light recently in Kauśāmbī excavations. Three types of arrow-heads (I), (J), and (K) have been found in these excavations of which Type (K) has been discovered from the large-scale destructions that marked the end of the defences at Kauśāmbī. It was destruction on an unparalleled scale, for the entire area was burnt down and the buildings almost razed to the ground. The barbed arrow-heads Type (K) which make their appearance for the first time in large numbers were obviously the instruments of massacre, introduced here by the Hūṇas, the invaders from north-western regions whose history has been well documented at Taxila.[1] Stratigraphically, the seals of the Hūṇa monarchs discovered in the excavations at Ghoṣitārāma, noted above, belong to the period of these destructions.[2]

The Chinese annals inform us that the Hūṇas possessed neither etiquette nor morality, *i.e.*, their standards of etiquette and morality differed widely from those of the Chinese. They also practised poligamy, and curiously enough, when a man died, his son married all his father's wives, except his own mother. In the absence of a son, the younger brother would take over the wives of the elder brother. They possessed personal names but made no use of family names, though they kept elaborate geneological trees and were always proud of their descent from illustrious chiefs. They reckoned ancestry from father to son but did not practise the law of primogeniture. They had no clearly defined law of inheritance which was often responsible for a wild scramble for power between the surviving brothers and sons of a dead chief leading to perpetual civil wars that proved disastrous to their empire. [1]

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[1] J. Marshall, *Taxila*, vol. ii, p. 547 ff.

[2] G. R. Sharma, *Excavations at Kauśāmbī*, pp. 15–16, 21, 37, 46; *Infra*, chap. vi.

It is interesting to note that inspite of their frequent diplomatic association with the Chinese, the Hūṇas could never learn the art of writing from them. As a result of this, no Hunnish historical records or simple inscriptions of the early period have come to light. Probably the Hūṇas were unable to master the Chinese ideographs, because of its being ill-suited to the writing of any Turanian language. It was not until the fourth century A. D. that their successors learnt, not the Chinese ideographs, but a phonetic script derived from one of the Near Eastern alphabets, when they came into contact with the peoples of Persia and India.

The above study shows that inspite of long historical contacts between the Chinese and the Hūṇas, they borrowed very little from one another. It was only in political sphere that the Hūṇas borrowed certain features from their great neighbour, for instance, their chiefs also adopted the celestial title of Exalted Son of Heaven and arranged their hierarchy of officials in pairs such as left and right princes, left and right marshals, but unlike the Chinese their higher offices were practically hereditary. [2]

These early Hūṇas practised some peculiar rites and customs. The Shanyu or the Supreme ruler made obeisance to the Sun every morning, and to the moon every evening. They observed three major festivals during the year, in the first month, in the fifth month and in the ninth month in which the Shanyu along with all the tribal chiefs and tribesmen used to be present to offer sacrifices to their ancestors, to heaven, to earth and to various supernatural beings. Besides these, they had a number of *shamans,* wizards, or witch-doctors who exerted tremendous influence over their fellow-tribesmen.

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[1] McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[2] *Shi Gi*, 110, 8; *Hou Han Shu*, 119, 7-8 (quoted, McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 107).

The Hūṇas also practised certain special ceremonies which, though vaguely associated with their religious ideas, speak of their cruel and barbarian character. It is said that at the time of making solemn oaths and covenants they "sacrificed a white horse and had the various members of the covenant drink the blood of this animal mixed with wine......and made ceremonial drinking bowls out of the skulls of their slaughtered enemies." [1] They probably borrowed this custom from the Scythians and Sarmatians, their western neighbours.

Their administration of justice was quick and speedy, and their laws were simple. For a minor offence a criminal had his ankles crushed and for major offence he was awarded penalty of death. The severity of their legal code can be judged from the fact that for a simple robbery a man was cut in two.

The burial of dead was followed by much ceremony. The corpse was dressed in finery and placed in the grave along with gold and silver objects. On the death of a great chief some of his concubines and retainers were also killed with the belief that they would follow him in the other world—obviously a practice which is reminiscent of the Hindu rites of *Satī* and *Jauhar.* [2] But, not withstanding all the ceremonies, they placed no mound tablets or trees over the grave and wore no mourning for the dead.

THE LATER HŪṆAS

The Ephthalites or the White Hūṇas practised most of the customs and manners of the early Hūṇas, though in certain respects they widely differed from their remote predecessors. For instance, the Ephthalites went in for polyandry, a social custom of considerable significance, entirely unknown to the other Hunnish tribes about whom we have documentary evidences. This custom was also probably unknown to the Indo-European tribes and the Yueji and the Turfanese with whom the Ephthalites are supposed to be connected. This practice, as we know, was also current in certain parts of India in ancient and mediaeval times and is even now somewhat popular among the modern Tibetans. As the earliest Chinese records do not speak of the Tibetans as practising polyandry it is difficult to accept that "there was probably some cultural filtration between the Ephthalites and the Tibetans in this regard."[1] It can, however, be suggested that the White Hūṇas adopted this practice from the Indians when they came into contact with the people of the borderland of India where the custom was still more or less prevalent. It was probably after this cultural filtration that the custom was subsequently carried to Central Asia by their tribesmen.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

[2] For details see, Thakur, *History of Suicide in India*, chap. iv.

From the eye-witness account of Priscus, one of the ambassadors from the Roman empire to the court of Attila, we learn of some of the curious manners and customs of the later Hūṇas. Besides other customs observed in the court, they held regular evening dances. The minstrels sang at the court and the singing was accompanied or followed by musical performances. Indeed, their rivels were more barbarous than those of the German and Gothic kings whom they had turned into vassals. Another peculiar custom that they strictly observed was that they always took special care to hide the tombs of their kings and buried them in much sequestered places and then killed the diggers of the graves so that they may not tell any body where the king was buried, lest somebody may remove his body. At times, they diverted waters of rivers from their natural beds and then, burying their kings in those beds, let the water flow in again.[2]

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[1] McGovern, *op. cit.* p. 407.

[2] Quoted Modi, *op. cit.*, pp. 556–57.

Moreover, they also observed a peculiar funeral custom as we learn from Kālidāsa who says that the valour of Raghu expressed itself in the scarlet cheeks of their ladies.[1] For long the correct import of this remark was missed by ancient commentators. Mallinātha suggested that the cheeks of the Hūṇa women were red by beating due to the sorrow caused by the death of their husbands. But, from the Chinese sources we learn that the T'u-kine of Mongolia used to slash their faces with knives so that blood could be seen flowing with tears on the death of their husbands or other relations. Herodotus also notes this custom as being prevalent among the Scythians[2] to honour their dead. Thus, the nomads of Central Asia including the Scythians and the Hūṇas observed this rite of mourning the dead by wounding their faces with knives and letting blood flow with tears. The Hūṇas or Hephthalites having passed through the nomadic stage and living in close proximity with the Scythians shared this horrible custom to which Kālidāsa pointedly remarks.

Writing on the fall of the Roman Empire Claudian, the poet, gives a scintillating picture of the Hūṇas in the fifth century A. D. in the following words :

> "There is a race on Scythia's verge extreme
> Eastward beyond the Taurs' chilly stream.
> The Northern Bear looks on no uglier crew ;
> Bare is their garb, their bodies foul to view.
> Their souls are ne'er subdued to steady toil,
> Or Cere's webs. Their sustenance is spoil.
> With horried wounds they gast their brutal brows
> And o'ver their murdered parents bind their vows."[3]

As they had entered India by this time we would not be unjustified in assuming that they followed most of these customs in the early phase of their career in India. The *Pādatāḍitakam* also throws some interesting light on their dress though from the nature of its description it is clear that their

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1. *RV*. iv. 68 : "कपोलपाटलादेशि वभूव रघुचेष्टितम्"
2. *Herodotus*. iv. 71.
3. Modi, *op. cit*. p. 557.

mode of wearing dress and the dress itself was an object of ridicule among the more civilised people of Pāṭaliputra and Ujjayinī. Unfortunately their dress is not enumerated in detail but it seems, they had their distinct dress which could be recognised from a considerable distance and which was worn sometimes out of fashion or curiosity or in imitation by the citizens of those places. For instance, we are told that Bhaṭṭi Maghavarmā, son of general Senaka, went to a prostitute in Pāṭaliputra in the dress of a Hūṇa which is satirically described by the *Viṭa*. [1] Regarding other details we have no information.

THE HŪṆAS AND THE ORIGIN OF RAJPUTS

The earlier favourite identification of the Ephthalites or the White Hūṇas, who dominated the political scene of northern India for about a century after the fall of the imperial Guptas, with the early Hūṇas has been disputed by some scholars on the ground that nowhere in epigraphic records, either in the pre-Harṣa or the post-Harṣa period, are they specified as White Hūṇas. [2] It has been further suggested on the basis of epigraphic and literary evidences that the Hūṇas gained some status in the course of time and established marital relations with other Indian powers—Kṣatriya and Brāhmaṇa. Moreover, the reference to the Hūṇas in the list of thirty-six ruling clans of the Rajputs would imply that they had probably gained the status of Kṣatriyas. [3] Long ago, F. E. Hall also suggested that the Hūṇas of the middle period were an Indian Kṣatriya family. [4] The suggestion is too far-fetched to merit consideration, and there is absolutely no evidence—literary or archaeological—to justify such assumption. It is an undisputed fact of Indian history that the Hūṇas were neither Kṣatriya nor Indian by origin or birth: they were foreigners from outside.

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[1] Śyāmalika's *Pādatāḍitakam*, in *Caturbhāṇī* (*Śṛṅgārahāṭa*), ed. Motichandra and V. S. Agrawal, pp. 181–82.

[2] *JUPHS*, vol. v (N. S.), Pt. ii, p. 1.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 6–7.

[4] *JBBAS*, xxx, p. 117, n ii; *JAOS*, vi, p. 528.

Pāṇini [1] assigns the foreigners like the Śakas, the Yavanas or the *Mlecchas* (who included the Hūṇas as well) a Śūdra status with this concession that they were not ostracized and a plate touched by them was not polluted. Their Indian origin was successfully questioned by scholars like P. C. Bagchi [2] and others who identified them with the Hiung-nus which we have discussed in detail elsewhere. Moreover, the Junāgarh rock inscription of Skandagupta makes it absolutely clear that they belonged to the *Mleccha* country (*mleccha deśeṣu*), and as early as fifth century A. D., Kālidāsa [3] and also Śyāmalika in his *Pādatāḍitakam* (composed in the early part of the fifth century A. D.) refer to the Hūṇas as being incontrovertibly foreigners with their distinctive foreign characteristics. [4] These and other early and later references—literary as well as archaeological—leave no doubt as to their foreign origin and identity. It is true that subsequently (seventh century onward) they gradually came to be assimilated in the Indian social structure, and the marital relations between them and the other Indian powers tend to suggest, they had probably attained some sort of dubious Rajput status. But, that is altogether a different story which we propose to tell in the following pages.

The suggestion that as early as the eleventh century the White Hūṇas or the Ephthalites had come to be regarded as Kṣatriyas was first mooted by D. R. Bhandarkar [5] which was more or less accepted by later writers. The thesis was obviously based on inscriptional evidences relating to their marital relations with the royal families of the later period. This was further responsible for the claim that "they had become so thoroughly Hinduised that they are looked upon as one of the thirty-six Rajput families believed to be genuine and pure."[1] We are further told that they have no longer any separate existence as a clan like the Chavāṇs, Pavārs, and so forth. Hūṇa is now a days found only as a family name in the Punjab, or as the name of a subdivision of such castes as Rebhāri.[2]

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[1] ii. 4, 10 : *Śūdrānam-anirvasitanām*.

[2] *PIHC*, Aligarh, p. 42 ff.

[3] *Raghuvaṁśa*, iv, 67–68.

[4] Cf. *Śṛṅgāra-hāṭa*, ed. Motichandra and V. S. Agrawal, Intro. p. 7. The passage in question reads (pp. 181–82) : "अये कस्य खल्वयमहूणो हूणमण्डनमण्डितः आर्यघोटकः पाटलिपुत्रकायाः पुष्पदास्या भवनद्वारमाविष्करोति…"

[5] D. R. Bhandarkar, "Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population" in *IA*, xl (1911), p. 21.

The confusion regarding the acceptance of the Hūṇas as one of the numerous clans of Kṣatriyas in later times arose, it seems, due to the misreading of the verses in question in the *Rāsā* (*Pṛthvīrājarāso* of Canda Baradāi) by Mohanlal who wrongly interpreted the name *Hula* as *Hūṇa.* According to C. V. Vaidya, the enumeration of the *Rāsā* gives the name, *Hula* with short *U* and *L,* and not *Hūṇa* and "by no rules of transformation, Prākṛta or other, can *Hūṇa* become *Hula.*"[3]

The question then naturally arises : who were the Hulas ? The Hindi census report of Marwar informs us that they formed a branch of the Sisodiā Rajputs. The name *Hula* is still current in Marwar[4] which is taken as the name of a branch of Guhilots or Guhilas.[5] It is also probable that they constituted a distinct clan and family by themselves. That the list of thirty-six Rajput clans, enumerated in the *Rāso* of Canda, the MS. of which is preserved in the Udepur Library, contains the name *Hula,* and not *Hūṇa,* is in itself a positive proof of the later being unmistakably distinct from the former which is further proved by the fact that among the clans that assisted Bappā Rāwal in his fight against the Muslims are mentioned both the Hūṇas and the Hulas.[6] It is true, the inscriptions of the time record the marriage of Kṣatriya kings with

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 21.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 21.

[3] C. V. Vaidya, *History of Mediaeval Hindu India,* vol. ii (1924), p. 26.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 26.

[5] Cf. *Report for 1891 and 1895*, vol. iii (Hindi), p. 6.

[6] Crooke, *Tod's Rajasthan*, vol. i, p. 290; C. V. Vaidya, *op. cit.* p. 25 ff.

Hūṇa princesses and also the Hūṇa kingdoms (*Hūṇa-maṇḍalas*) but that does not necessarily prove that they were treated as Kṣatriya kings or that they were accorded full-fledged status in the Kṣatriya hierarchy. In ancient and mediaeval times, and sometimes even now, the kings married the daughters of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras and even the *Mlecchas*, but none of the latter was ever treated as Kṣatriya. Moreover, the epigraphic records do not at all refer to the Kṣatriyas as Hūṇas; they simply mention the marriage of the Hūṇa princesses with the Kṣatriya kings. Had the process been the other way about, there would have been some justification for treating the Hūṇas as such in early-mediaeval period, but we do not come across even one instance of a Hūṇa prince marrying a Kṣatriya princess. Naturally we feel inclined to believe that it was just a one-way traffic, and the Hūṇas, inspite of these marital relations, were never accorded the rightful place in the Kṣatriya order.

To ascribe, therefore, the Kṣatriya origin to the Hūṇas is utter misrepresentation of historical facts and to argue that most of the Rajputs were in later times descended from the Hūṇas seems fallacious. The earliest reference to Hūṇas is found in Indian literature and epigraphic records of the fourth-fifth centuries whereas the Kṣatriyas, along with the Brāhmaṇas, dominated the Indian political scene since the times of the Vedas. The fact is that the Rajputs of the later times, by and large, represented the remnants of the Kṣatriya order of the earlier times, and these two need not be studied separately.

There are, however, scholars who argue that the Rajputs who entered the stage of Indian history in ninth century are to be distinguished from the Kṣatriyas of the earlier times. In other words, they dispute the āryan descent of the Rajputs on the basis of the so-called *Agnikula* theory, now exploded. The idea was first mooted by Tod and later skilfully developed by V. A. Smith, supported by D. R. Bhandarkar, William Crooke and others. In his zeal to ascribe foreign descent to the Rajputs Smith dismissed outright the age-old traditions and probabilities and the conclusions of ethnology "as of no use to the historian." [1] Claiming that his evidence is "now established by good evidence" he advances the same hackneyed argument that the clans or families (of the foreign immigrants) which "succeeded in winning chieftainships were admitted readily into the frame of Hindu polity as *Kṣatriyas* or *Rajputs*," [2] and treats the Guhilots or Guhilas and the Rāṭhors, the Candellas and the Pratihāras, the most famous Rajput clans of the present day, as in reality having descended either from the barbarians, i.e., the Hūṇas or from the aborigines, *i.e.*, the Gonds etc., inspite of their claim to āryan descent. The crux of the problem gets much too confused when he is supported by D. R. Bhandarkar, [3] followed by Jackson and Crooke, the editor of *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan.*

Bhandarkar supposed, obviously on the basis of the *Agnikula* myth, that the Pratihāras, Paramūras, Cālukyas and the Cāhamānas descended from the Gurjaras who were foreigners. In his famous paper, "Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population," he declares : "that the Gurjars were foreigners has now been admitted on all hands. They have been identified with the Khazars who occupied a very prominent position on the borderland of Europe and Asia especially in the sixth century A. D....... I have little doubt that they entered into India with the Hūṇas......" [4] He has adduced several arguments in favour of his contention showing that most of the Rajputs forming the thirty-six clan are descended either from the Gurjars (or the Hūṇas) or from other foreign elements who entered the body-politic of India from time to time. In this he has been zealously supported by Crooke who believes that "a wide gulf lies between the Vedic Kṣatriyas and the Rajputs of mediaeval times which it is now impossible to bridge. It is now certain that the origin of many clans dates from the Śaka or Kuṣāṇa invasions or more certainly from that of the White Huns who destroyed the Gupta empire about 480 A. D. The Gurjar tribe connected with the latter people adopted Hinduism and their leaders formed the main stock from which the higher Rajput families sprang...... The group denoted by the name Kṣatriya or Rajput depended on status rather than on descent and it was, therefore, possible for foreigners to be introduced into these tribes without any violation of the prejudices of caste which was then partially developed."[1] It is further suggested that the necessity "to disguise this admission of foreigners under a convenient form" gave birth to the legend how by a solemn act of purification or initiation under the superintendence of the ancient Vedic Ṛṣis, the fire-born septs (*Agnikula*) were "created to help the Brahmins in repressing Buddhism and other heresies," and the privilege was "confined to four septs known as *Agnikula* or *fire-born*, viz., the Paramāra, the Parihāra (Pratihāra), Cālukya and Cauhāna."[2]

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[1] *EHI* (3rd edn.), p. 322.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 322.

[3] *IA*., xl. (1911), p. 7 ff.

[4] *Ibid*., pp. 30-31.

The whole tenor of arguments advanced by these scholars reads like a figment of poetic imagination devoid of substance and divorced from historical facts. The assumption of Bhandarkar that the foreign origin of the Gurjars has been accepted on all hands and that they have been indentified with Khizars or Khazars seems more a piece of confused thinking than sober historical analysis resulting from impartial study of relevant data and facts. Crooke goes a step further and tries to demolish the sacred āryan image of the mediaeval Rajputs. In this persistent and planned endeavour to establish what is imaginary, truth has been the greatest casualty and the brave Rajputs the worst sufferers. The whole basis of their age-old institution has been challenged and sought to be torn to pieces ; traditions and ethnology have been unceremoniously thrown to the winds and facts of history deliberately distorted and twisted to justify irrational conclusions. Crooke believes, and so do others of this school, that all the foreign elements that entered India from time to time, were received, as it were, with open hands and were given the status of Kṣatriya or Rajput without any violation of caste-prejudice "which was then partially developed." The statement is simply amazing, for we know that the caste-system was by this time fully developed and made too rigid to admit any outsider into its fold. It was all a matter of descent, status came afterwards. Rigidities in the Kṣatriya or Rajput hierarchy were slackened only in the mediaeval period in respect of marriage but even then we have it on record that there were Rajput families who preferred death to dishonour rather than degrade their descent and status.

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[1] Crooke, *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan*, p. xxxi.

[2] *Ibid.*

Syllogistically speaking, the above arguments boil down to the following :

(i) The Rajputs are the descendants of Gujars who are said to have entered India along with the Hūṇas ;

(ii) The Gujars, identified with Khizars (Khazars), are foreigners, and, therefore,

(iii) The Rajputs are descendants of foreigners.

In other words, if it is established by good evidence that the Gujars are foreigners and the Rajputs their descendants, it is then logically proved that the Rajputs are foreigners, either descended from the Hūṇas or Śakas or Scythians or other elements. All this is based on the said *Agnikula* myth propounded first by Canda Baradāi, the first great historian of the Rajputs. But, in recent times, the genuineness of the story, as given in the *Pṛthvīrāja Rāsā* has been challenged by scholars who claim on good grounds that "the story is not only a poet's fancy but further arises from the misconception of even that fancy, for it seems that even Canda himself did not wish to represent that these Kṣatriyas were newly created Kṣatriyas."[1] This is further supported by epigraphic evidences which clearly state that these four, or atleast three, represented themselves as having descended from the solar and lunar *vaṁśas* in the ninth century A. D. The Harṣa stone inscription,[2] the Bilhari stone inscription,[3] the Udepur praśasti,[1] a stone inscription in the Ajmer Museum,[2] the *Hammīra-mahākāvya* and other records of the ninth and tenth centuries leave no doubt that these Kṣatriyas belonged either to lunar or solar race.[3] How could Canda then represent them as *Agnikulas* in the twelfth century when he is said to have composed the *Pṛthvīrāja-rāsā*? Besides, the imaginary story given in the *Rāsā* is contradicted by Canda himself when he clearly mentions only three lineages—the solar, the lunar and the yādava for the famous thirty-six royal families (which include the *Hula,* and not the *Hūṇa,* as shown above) enumerated by him.[4] It seems, therefore, that the story of Canda has been entirely misconstrued. What he actually wanted to convey was that the four warriors (the Parihāra, the Paramāra, the Cāhamāna, and the Cālukya who were most prominent in fighting against the Muslims) of the already existing clans, came out of the fire at Vaśiṣṭha's bid to fight the *rākṣasas* (*i.e.*, the Muslims) : he never intended to create the myth that they were heroes newly created by Vaśiṣṭha.[5] Moreover, their own traditions declare them to be of the solar and lunar races of Kṣatriyas, being the descendants of the two hordes of Āryan invaders who entered India in pre-historic times by way of the Punjab and the Gangetic valley. Added to it is the anthropometric measurement taken at the time of the census of 1901 substantiating their claim to āryan descent which is borne out by their straight noses, long heads and their tall stature that characterise the āryan races all over the world. Western scholars like Nesfield and Ibbetson also support the truth of their claim to be treated as āryans as descendants of the Kṣatriyas who settled in India in Vedic times.

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[1] C. V. Vaidya. *HMHI*, vol. ii, p. 13.

[2] *EI*, vol. ii, p. 119; also cf. H. Sarda's paper "*Pṛthvīrāja-Vijaya*" in *JRAS*, v, 1903.

[3] *EI*, vol. i, pp. 253–59.

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[1] *Ibid*, vol. i,

[2] *HMHI*, vol. ii, p. 14.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] For details see *Ibid*, vol. ii, pp. 12–17, 18–21, 22–26.

[5] The enumeration of the Rajput families in the *Rāsā* begins with the following lines : "रवि ससि जाधव वंस । कुकुत्स्थ परमार सदावर । चाहुआन चालुक्क । छंदक सिलार अभियर ।"

But, unfortunately the story which was quite imaginary in character, and misrepresented in substance, subsequently came to be believed as true in popular parlance with the result that it served as a positive evidence to the historians to strike out clear-cut distinctions between the Vedic Kṣatriya and the Rajput of the mediaeval times, condemning the latter to some despicable foreign origin or lineage. It gained popular credence from sixteenth century onward along with the generally accepted epic (*Pṛthvīrāja-rāsā*) to such an extent that even the victims, with the decline in their power and fortunes, completely forgot about the great historical and social injustice done to them and glorified in their being *Agnikulas*. The mischief, caused by the misinterpretation of Canda's story was finally completed by a new Canda, named Surajmal Bhata of Bundikot who composed another Hindi epic poem, *Vaṁśa-bhāskara* in glorification of the Cāhamānas, his patron's family, and assigned five *vaṁśas* for the Kṣatriyas [1] with the so-called exact date c. 6632 B. C. (*i.e.*, 3531 years before the Kali age began), obviously quite imaginary and ridiculous, in greater detail. And, by the seventeenth century the myth became a logical fact when the four clans put their final seal of approval by accepting a new *vaṁśa* for themselves. This view later came to be exploited by Tod, Smith, Bhandarkar, Jackson, Crooke and others which tragically resulted in history being dominated by myths and legends.

The latest masterly monograph on the subject by D. C. Sircar [2] throws some refreshing light on the origin of the Rajputs vis-a-vis the Hūṇas as well as other foreign and non-āryan elements that inhabited the different parts of the country. We believe, such a comprehensive study of the origin of the Rajputs, based on literary and epigraphic data, has been made for the first time keeping in view the foreigners and non-āryans of different grades of culture whom the leaders of the ancient Indian society have tried to locate in their conventional scheme of the *Caturvarṇa* classification of society. The confusion between the solar and lunar races in the "fabricated geneologies" of most of the early-mediaeval Rajputs has been discussed in some detail and it has been shown that while the Guhilas or Guhilots belonged to the Nāgara Brāhmaṇa family of Ānandapura,[1] the Eastern Cālukyas of Veṅgī belonged to the Dravidian stock and *Agnikula* origin was really claimed only by the Paramāras who were probably neither non-āryans nor foreigners.[2] Accordingly, the Solaṅkīs (Caulukyas or Cālukyas) and Rāṭhods (the Rāṣṭrakūṭas) were of Karṇāṭa origin while the Pratihāras (Parihāras) were foreigners of the Hūṇa-Gurjara stock.[3] "The Hūṇas themselves are also often regarded as one of the thirty-six respectable Rajput clans, though the different lists do not sometimes tally because the word 'thirty-six' in this context really means 'all' as in several other cases."[4]

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[1] भुजभव, मनुभव अर्कभव, ससिभव, छत्रन वंश। है चउतिम, शुचिवँस, इव पंचम प्रथित प्रशंस" (Quoted, *HMHI*, vol. ii, p. 16).

[2] Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kiṣkindhā*, chaps. i–ii.

Thus, from the above discussion the following conclusions emerge.

(i) Most of the Rajputs of the early-mediaeval period were of non-āryan origin;

(ii) Only the Paramāras really claimed the *Agnikula* origin;

(iii) The Pratihāras were foreigners of Hūṇa-Gurjara stock; and

(iv) The Gurjaras were full-blooded foreigners.

We have already discussed above the first two suggestions in some detail and have shown that the *Agnikula* theory as given in the *Rāsā*, though of little value and thoroughly misinterpreted, has been given more prominence by the writers on Rajput history than it deserves. Epigraphic records of the various Rajput dynasties are of vague and conflicting nature and so are literary records which do dot enlighten us on the real state of affairs. Moreover, it is also true that "when a foreign tribe became Hinduised, its members claimed the status generally of the Kṣatriya, though the orthodox Brāhmanists were inclined to assign the position of the degraded Kṣatriya atleast to the people of the ruling classes while the rank and file, when developed into a caste, could have been characterised as Śūdra inspite of their own claim to be Kṣatriya." [1] It has been further suggested that the ruling classes of this category sustained their social status by contracting matrimonial alliance with other Indian ruling families since "in ancient India communal consideration played little part in that matter," [2] and the instances of marriages between the Mauryas and the Seleucid Greeks of Western Asia, the Brāhmaṇa Vākāṭakas and the non-Brāhmaṇa Guptas, the Dravidian Śātavāhanas (claiming the Brāhmaṇa status) and the Śakas of Ujjayinī etc. have been cited as further proof of such alliances.

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 1–11.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 21.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 17.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 17.

But, while citing these instances we must not forget that such negotiations were just a one-way traffic. The foreigners gave their princesses or daughters in marriage to the members of the ruling families of the country in order to enhance their social prestige in their new land of adoption. There are practically no instances to show that they also married the daughters of the local ruling families and were accorded equal status as such. We have already discussed this aspect of their social status in detail in the preceding pages and, as such the point needs no further elaboration.

In spite of the above discussion, there is yet another pertinent question which remains unanswered : what happened to the Vedic Kṣatriya families after the loss of their political power due to the rise of big empires in later times ? Did they all disintegrate and lose their identity altogether ? If the Brāhmaṇas could maintain their position intact in the age-old social hierarchy despite vicissitudes in their fortunes through the ages, how is it that the Vedic Kṣatriyas, proud of their great martial glory and splendid intellectual attainments, forgot all about their past achievements and degraded themselves into such a band of despicable creatures that they slowly and sadly withdrew in the mystic past and had to seek, rather invent, a respectable origin for themselves in later times when they again attained position and power ?

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 18.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 18.

A study of the term *Rājput* [1] (Sanskrit *Rājaputra*) shows that the modification of the meaning of this term may be compared to that of *Rājanya,* derived from *Rājan,* 'a king' which originally meant 'the members of the royal family, the king's relations'. The term soon came to mean 'the nobles' and finally it became a synonym of *Kṣatriya* even in the Vedic literature. [2] "But *Rājanyaka* (which is the same as *Rājanya,* as also *Rājānaka* or *Rājanaka,* from which the well known subordinate title *Rāṇaka* was derived) continued till the mediaeval age to be used as the designation of a class of feudatary chiefs." [3] Thus, devoid of their power and position they still continued as a class of feudatory chiefs and remained scattered over the country in the succeeding centuries, and notwithstanding their political inactivity in the following periods, they continued to grow and expand in size and often followed the time-honoured practice of naming their families after some bold heroes who succeeded in founding new principalities [4] in different parts of the country. Such dynasties emerged under new family titles and their offshoots grew to such an extent that in the course of time it became impossible for them to trace their exact pedigrees from their Vedic ancestry. In some cases, however, they remembered only the original lineage, while in others they forgot all about it owing to the long span of time.

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[1] For a detailed discussion of the meaning of the term *Rajput* or *Rājaputra* and their relation to the Vedic Kṣatriyas, see Vaidya, *HMHI*, vol. ii, pp. 43–63 and Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kiṣkindhā*, p. 16 ff.

[2] The word *Rājanya* has been used by Pāṇini (*Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 4, 2. 4) and also in the *Śānti Parva* of the Mahābhārata for the Kṣatriya class.

[3] Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 16.

[4] *JUPHS*, vol. x (New Series), pt. ii, 1962, p. 108.

It was during this period of their political insignificance that a number of foreign invasions took place and a vast tract of the country came to be occupied by the foreigners for a long time. These invasions were quite different in nature from those that took place in the mediaeval period and afterwards. The Persians, the Indo-Greeks, the Śaka-Scythians and lastly the Hūṇas dominated the political scene for some time and later completely merged into the Indian society forgetting their identity altogether. As they had attained power and prestige they also claimed Kṣatriya status and succeeded in contracting matrimonial alliances with the ancient ruling classes in the country. Inspite of this new status, however, they were never accorded the status of the full-blooded Kṣatriya : on the other hand, they were given a place in the society as degraded or *Vrātya* Rājanya as they did not follow the Brāhmaṇical code of conduct in social behaviour and religious observance. [1] The attitude of Manu [2] and Patañjali[3] and also other ancient law-givers towards this new class of Kṣatriyas, who were descendants of *Vrātya* Rājanya (apostate Kṣatriya) as well as Kṣatriya degraded to the status of Śūdra or outcast (*Vṛṣala*) is the same, and they were condemned as degraded owing to their non-observance of prescribed rules and disrespect to the Brāhmaṇas.

In the epigraphic records of this period also, this distinction between the ancient Kṣatriya and the degraded Kṣatriya has been maintained to some extent. In one of the Kalacuri records we find that a particular Kṣatriya has been eulogised as "king of twice born" (*dvijarāja*) [4] while in another a ruling chief is described as "a jewel among *dvijas*" (*dvijavargaratna*). [5]

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[1] Manu, x. 43–44 :

"शनकैस्तु क्रियालोपादिमाः क्षत्रियजातयः ।
वृषलत्वं गता लोके ब्राह्मणादर्शनेन च ॥
पौण्ड्रकाश्चौड्रद्रविडाः काम्बोजा यवनाः शकाः ।
पारदाः पह्लवाश्चीनाः किराता दरदाः खशाः ॥"

[2] *Ibid*, x, 22, 43–44.

[3] *Mahābhaṣya*, 2, 4, 10.

[4] *EI*, vol. i, p. 41.

[5] *Ibid*, vol. i, p. 234.

Further, from the Smṛtis [1] as well as from the accounts of Alberuni [2] we learn that the Kṣatriyas, like the Brāhmaṇas, were exempted from capital punishment. All this clearly shows that the Kṣatriyas enjoyed the highest status in the society as did the Brāhmaṇas, during this period.

Thus, the use of the terms *Kṣatriya* and *Rājaputra* (or Rajput) in the inscriptions of this period is interesting as it shows that though efforts were made to maintain distinction between the high and low of the same order, the anomaly still existed. The term *Rājaputra* became popular in early-mediaeval period (A. D. 700–1200) replacing the earlier term *Kṣatriya,* denoting exclusively the ruling Kṣatriya clan. That both the terms were in vogue side by side can be seen from the study of the Pāla and Sena records. In some of the records of the Pāla and Sena dynasties the king is described as "head ornament of Kṣatriyas" or "diadem of the Kṣatriya clan", [3] while in others they are described as being born in Rājaputra family. [4] In the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena [5] the Senas are called Rājaputra whereas the Madhāinagar grant of Lakṣmaṇasena describes Sāmantasena as *Kula-śiromaṇi, i.e.,* "the head-garland of the Karṇāṭa Kṣatriyas." [6] The Karṇāṭa kings of Mithilā (A. D. 1097–1324) have also been described as Karṇāṭa-Kṣatriya like their counterparts, the Senas in Bengal. [7] That Nānyadeva, the founder of the Karṇāṭa dynasty of Mithilā belonged to the Karṇāṭa country and was a Karṇāṭa Kṣatriya is amply proved by the express reference to him and to his dynasty in the Nepalese chronicle or *Vaṁśāvalī*. [8] On the other hand, a Cāhamāna record [9] dated

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[1] Gautama, 12, 43; *Mitākṣarā on Yāj.*, ii, 4.

[2] Sachau, vol. ii, p. 162.

[3] *EI*, vol. xv, pp. 278–86.

[4] *IA*, vol. xv, p. 308; *EI*, vol. xiv, p. 159, verse 3.

[5] *EI*, vol. xv, pp. 279–82 and verse 3.

[6] *JASB* (NS), 1909, p. 471.

[7] Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithilā*, p. 227.

[8] For details, see *Ibid*, p. 228.

[9] *EI*, vol. xi, p. 53.

V. S. 1239 refers to a Rājaputra Jojala as *Rāja-cintaka*, i.e., one who looked after the administration of the State.

The tenor of the use of the term *Rājaputra* in the official records or grants of the period tends to suggest that the term was used more or less to designate a prince or a crown-prince to distinguish him from other officers of the State. In the records of the Paramāras [1] and the Gāhaḍavālas [2] the word *Yuvarāja* occurs after the king and the queen while in the epigraphs of eastern India the word *Rājaputra* is used for the crown-prince. The frequent use of this term is also found in the Pāla [3] and Sena documents [4] as well as in the grants of Orissa [5] and Assam. [6] In the Kalacuri records, however, we have both the terms *Rājaputra* and *Mahārājaputra* denoting the same sense. Thus, a critical analysis of all the epigraphic records of the north Indian dynasties would show that the prince or the crown-prince was generally regarded as a scion of the Kṣatriya varṇa or family.

Another interesting feature of some of the later inscriptions is that they often contain *gotra* and *pravara* of the donors which are conspicuous by their absence in the records of the Gupta and Vardhan dynasties. A persual of these documents would suggest that in some places the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas had the same *gotra* and *pravara* which shows that some of the Kṣatriyas in later times had adopted Brāhmaṇical *gotra* and *pravara* as their own. [7] The mystery can be explained in the case of those Kṣatriyas who were converted to Buddhism but later reverted to the old Brāhmaṇical religion soon after the decline of Buddhism (*Purohito pravaro rājñām*). [8] Once degraded they now tried to revive their old glory by claiming to inherit blood relationship with the original or ancient Kṣatriyas but their efforts proved infructuous. In the circumstances they were compelled to constitute a new group or class and adopted the *gotra* and *pravara* of their Brāhmaṇa *purohitas* in order to acquire the same prestige and honour that their Kṣatriya brethren enjoyed.

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[1] *EI*, vol. iii, p. 47.

[2] *Ibid*, vols. iv & vii.

[3] *Ibid*, vol. iv, p. 34; xv, p. 2.

[4] *Ibid*, vol. xii, p. 8.

[5] *Ibid*, vol, xv, p. 2.

[6] *JASB*, 1897, p. 13, no. 2.

[7] *IA*, vol. xviii, pp. 134–136, 131.

[8] For details see *Proc. of the Sixth All-India Oriental Conference*, Patna, 1930, p. 344–45.

But, in the Purāṇas, which are supposed to be the special repositories of the Kṣatriya traditions, the Kṣatriyas are mentioned only by their family names, and not by Brāhmaṇical *gotra* names. In fact, from the times of the Ṛgveda to those of the Purāṇas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas had separate family names (*gotras*), peculiar to each class, and not common to both, except in the rare case of mere coincidence of names such as Gautama and Vatsa etc., although some ruling and other well-to-do families of Rajputs even now describe their Brāhmaṇical *gotras* and *pravaras*, the latter being mostly incorrect.[1]

Thus, in all probability it seems that the leading Kṣatriya families, on their conversion from Buddhism to the revived Brāhmaṇism, were encouraged to adopt the *pravaras* of their purohitas and finally their *gotras* too, with the proverbial zeal of new converts which find full play in their inscriptions. But, to the ordinary Kṣatriya his own family name, clan or sub-clan remained his *gotra* as it does even today.[2]

The entire evidence—inscriptional and literary—at our disposal, when critically examined and analysed threadbare, gives us the impression that the Rajputs of the mediaeval period were divided into two distinct categories. The first category included the nobility or the ruling aristocratic families whose number was few and the second constituted the common mercenary Rajputs who also included within their fold the foreign elements such as the Śakas, the Hūṇas etc. The first group enjoyed a high status in the society and were respected by the Brāhmaṇas whereas the other group had a low status. This interesting distinction is further clearly marked out in the account of the Arab traveller Ibn Khurdādba (who died in 912 A. D.) which refers to seven castes, the first place being given to *Sābkufrīa* (or *Samkufrīa*), the second to Brāhmaṇas and the third to *Katariya* (Kṣatriya), in order of preference.[1] Al-Idrisi also gives the same classification of seven castes in his account.[2] From these details it is obvious that the *Katariyas* stand for the common Kṣatriyas while the *Sābkufrīa* for the *Sat Kṣatriya*. The distinction between the two, according to Altekar,[3] seems similar to the distinction between the Kṣatriya and the Rājanya of the earlier period, the former constituting the general military order, the latter being the members of aristocracy descended from royal stock. In other words, all fighters were not Kṣatriyas and all Kṣatriyas did not constitute the fighting class.

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 343.

[2] For details about their *gotras* and *pravaras*, see *Ibid*, pp. 329–47.

This distinction between the *Vrātya* Kṣatriyas and the ancient ruling classes clearly shows that the Vedic Kṣatriyas still inhabited the land and maintained their age-old status, with whom the *Vrātya* Kṣatriyas or the *Vṛṣalas* could not occupy an equal position. Thus, when they (the foreigners) failed to gain the status of true Kṣatriyas while in power, it was more difficult for them to achieve that distinction when deprived of all their power and privileges. Inter-caste marriage was, however, liberally contracted and the *anuloma* form of marriage put no restrictions on having a princess of foreign origin as wife.[4] In those times, as even now, in Hindu society more attention was paid to the purity of blood in the case of the marriages of girls than those of boys resulting in considerable admixture of foreign blood among the Rajputs, as among others. Nevertheless, their claim to the Vedic ancestry from the paternal side can not be brushed aside contemptuously. Moreover, the off-springs of such marriages were never consecrated as kings, the choice invariably fell on the off-spring of the queen married in accordance with the Vedic rites. It is true, all those claiming to be Rajputs in modern times, do not really belong to the ancient Kṣatriya hierarchy, but the origin of the leading Kṣatriya clans holding sway over northern India during the period of Rajput ascendancy can not be successfully disputed on the basis of the available facts which go overwhelmingly against their foreign lineage.

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[1] Elliot–Dowson, *History of India*, vol. i, pp, 16–17.

[2] *Ibid*, vol. i, p. 76.

[3] A. S. Altekar, *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their times*, p. 319; B. Upadhyaya, *The Socio-religious condition of North India* (700–1200 A. D.), pp. 61–62.

[4] *EI*, ii, p. 4; viii, p. 44; *IA*, xxxix, p. 191.

The suggestion that the Pratihāras belonged to the Gurjara stock who were foreigners has also to be considered in this context. Unfortunately D. C. Sircar has not examined this aspect of the problem and left it open. [1]

Recently R. S. Sharma, following P. C. Bagchi, [2] has also suggested that the Gurjaras came in the wake of the Hūṇas from Central Asia and they were the Indian equivalents of a Central Asian people Wusun who came to be known as Gusur in the fourth century and this "gave rise to the term Gajur which was sanskritised into the term Gūjara." [3] It is further suggested on the authority of the Abbotabad inscription dated 3rd century, [4] that as a foreign element the Gusurs appeared in India earlier, *i.e.,* 3rd century A. D. The inscription in question mentions one Shaphar, the "son of Maka and a member of the Gaśūra clan or class." [5] Like Shaphar and Maka, Gaśūra is a foreign term to be equated with the Krorayina *guśura* and Kuchean sanskrit *gauśura* which has been interpreted as "a person of good family or of the Gauśura class of nobility." [6] But, in no standard Sanskrit or Prākṛta dictionary do we come across the term *guśura* or *gauśura* which renders any scientific meaning or interpretation of the term impossible. In the absence of any possible interpretation we fail to understand how it has been interpreted as "a person of good family or...... of nobility" as noted above. Inspite of this, we are told that the Gauśuras or Gurjaras came to India as a conquering minority who imposed themselves as dominant clans on settled villages and provided some sort of external stimulus to the growth of feudalism in India during this period. R. S. Sharma is further inclined to accept the view that Cāhamānas, Paramāras and Caulukyas or Cālukyas were ethnically allied to the Gurjara-Pratihāras as can be inferred from the bardic traditions which trace the origin of all these peoples to a common sacrificial pit (*agnikula*) on Mount Abu.[1]

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[1] Sircar, *op. cit*, p. 17

[2] *India and Central Asia*, p. 17.

[3] R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism : c. 300–1200*, pp. 106–07.

[4] *EI*, vol. xxx, p. 61.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 61.

[6] *Ibid*, p. 61

We have shown elsewhere that the Wusun, like the Dingling and the Wuhuan were the vassals of the Hūṇas when the latter were confined to Mongolia.[2] In c. 72–71 B. C. on the crushing defeat of the Hūṇas by the Chinese, they severed their relations with their erstwhile masters, the Hūṇas, and kept themselves confined to their small principalities there. We have thus absolutely no evidence—historical, philological, ethnological or otherwise—to suppose that the same Wusun were the Guśurs who later came to India as a conquering minority and were ultimately known as Gūjar or Gurjaras in the history of early-mediaeval India. Thus, in this respect they seem to have accepted the conclusions of the previous writers on the subject. The question naturally arises: who were the Gurjaras? Were they foreigners? If so, what is the historical evidence supporting their foreign origin? Bhandarkar claims: 'that the Gurjars were foreigners has now been admitted on all hands.'[3] But, H. Risley, on anthropometrical considerations, pertinently remarks that the pastoral Gujars of the Punjab are unquestionably āryan by race.[1] They stand first with regard to the fineness of the nose, their index (66.9) being lower than that of even the Parisians. And, yet there are some who believe that they are Scythians and others who identify them with Khizars. Risley distinctly includes the Jāṭs among the Indo-āryans, and the Gurjaras or Gujars also fall in the same category. Their dark complexion need not worry historians as, according to Risley, "the most important points to be observed in the Indo-āryan series of measurements are the great uniformity of type, and the very slight differences between the higher and lower groups."[2] The Gujars possess fine noses in India, long heads and tall stature—a type which is so persistent that the Jāṭs and the Gujars, wherever found, present the same characteristics of head, nose and stature, and even complexion. Thus, ethnologically they are decidedly āryan and can not be taken to be the descendants of Khizars or Gaetoe, who are Mongolian in race, on the mere plea of the similarity of sound in names.[3]

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[1] R. S. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 265.

[2] *Infra*, chap. i.

[3] Bhandarkar, *op cit.*, p. 30 ff. P. C. Bagchi, basing his theory on Chinese phonology, suggests that the Hūṇas were finally merged in Hindu society as Gurjaras (Vide—*Presidential Address to the Ancient India Section of the Indian History Congress, Aligarh,* 1944).

It is true, the word *Gujar* or *Gurjara* occurs from about the seventh century A. D. in the works of Bāṇa and Hiuen Tsang. Bāṇa says that Prabhākaravardhana defeated the Hūṇas along with the Gurjaras, and Hiuen Tsang refers to their two kingdoms, one at Bhinmal in Rajputana and the other at Broach (Bharauch). It is from these references that scholars have inferred that the Gujars were foreigners who entered India along with the Hūṇas in the sixth century A. D. and from whom later descended the famous Rajput clans. Smith candidly admitted that "the Gurjaras are believed to have entered India along with, or soon after, the White Huns and to have settled in large numbers in Rajputana, but there is nothing to show what part of Asia they came from or to what race they belonged."[4] But, inspite of the total absence of historical data bearing on their foreign origin some scholars have doggedly pursued the matter and clung on to the view that they were either Scythians or related to the Hūṇas or identical with the Khazars or Guśurs.

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[1] Risley, *Census Report for 1901*, p. 498.

[2] *Ibid*, p, 500.

[3] *HMHI*, vol. i, p. 77.

[4] *Early History of India* (3rd edn.), pp, 412 and 822.

Historically and ethnologically the Khazars and the Gurjaras, except the similarity in their names, seem to be two altogether distinct races with special characteristics and features of their own. The home of the former was on the spurs of the Caucasus whereas the latter were confined to India alone. The origin of both is much disputed, though the former are regarded as akin to Georgians, Finns Ugrians and Turks. They were "fair-skinned, black-haired and of a remarkable beauty. The Kara (black) Khazars were ugly, short and almost as black as Indians." [1] Thus, the black Khazars were ugly and short-statured whereas the Gujars, dark-complexioned, are all tall having fine features. But, the tall beautiful Khazars were very fair unlike the Gujars and ethnologically much nearer the Hūṇas. Their history shows that they hardly left the land they inhabited and "were for the most part restricted within the couped up area." [2] In matters of disposition and occupation both these races seem to be diametrically opposed to each other. The Venetians of the Caspian and Black sea, the Khazars mainly formed a civil commercial people, founders of cities, while the Gujars still possess tribal character nomadic in habits and cattle-breeders by profession. Infact, they never trade and are not city-dwellers with elaborate civil organisation. It seems, therefore, impossible that the Khazars could have been the fore-fathers of the Gujars of India. Indeed, nothing in history really shows that the Gujars were foreigners or Khazars or that they entered India along with the Hūṇas from outside in the fifth or sixth century A. D. Their anthropometrical characteristics are purely āryan and

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1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. xiii, p. 362.
2. *Ibid*, p. 363. The Khazar kingdom flourished from the second half of the sixth century to the ninth century A. D. We know very little about their history and civilization but there is no doubt that during this period they had no connection whatever with India. (for details see *Ibid*, xiii, pp. 262–63).

there is not a scrap of historical evidence to suggest, much less to prove, that they are foreigners. "The Gujars," says Ibbetson, "are the eighth largest caste in the Punjab, only the Jāṭs, Rajputs, Pathans, Arāians and Brahmins among the higher and Chamārs and Chuhrās among the lower exceeding them. They are fine, stalwart fellows of precisely the same type as the Jāṭ. They are of the same social standing as the Jāṭ, perhaps slightly inferior and the two eat and drink in common without any scruple."[1] Thus, ethnologically they can not by any stretch of imagination be branded as foreigners from whom the later Rajputs are said to have sprung up. They are the āryans with the best āryan noses, and historically the Vaiśyas of the Vedas and the Smṛtis.[2] They had nothing to do with the Hūṇas and they were the descendants of the Vedic Āryans, although much degraded in later times due to their deviation from the Vedic rites and adoption of various professions and matrimonial alliances with other non-Rajput elements such as the Hūṇas etc.

The above discussion, we hope, makes it clear that the Hūṇas were not one of the thirty-six clans of Rajputs and they were never recognised as genuine Kṣatriya despite their marital relations with the ruling Kṣatriya families. We have it on record that the Kṣatriyas, and sometimes also the Brāhmaṇas, married the Hūṇa ladies, as they often married the ladies of other castes, but we have absolutely no evidence to suggest that the ladies of the princely caste were ever given in marriage to the Hūṇa princes, though there is no doubt that the Hūṇas gradually acquired a respectful place in the society. With the influx of the Muslim elements they merged completely in Indian society, and came to be treated as Kṣatriyas in popular parlance. The Mers of Rajputana are possibly the twentieth century descendants of these Hūṇas who entered India in the fifth century A. D.[3]

The social status of the Hūṇas, after they came into contact with the Indian princes, is noticed in a number of records mentioned earlier. They had obtained a legal status through matrimonial alliances as well as through adopting the culture and the language of the land. The study of the records further shows that they gradually came to be absorbed in Hindu society immediately after the defeat of Mihirakula. As we have noted in the preceding chapter the Hūṇas mostly constituted the mercenary soldiers of the kings of Indian dynasties in north-eastern India and settled down, completely Indianised. Besides military activities, they were assigned important role in the various social welfare activities of the areas they inhabited. They sometimes worked as a trustee of the temple-administration as is clear from the record of Allāṭa of Mewār dated 953 A. D. (V. S. 1010) which says that a Hūṇa acted as a member on the council of temple-administration (*goṣṭhika*). [1] The name of a Hūṇa among the *goṣṭhika* undoubtedly shows that their foreign character was almost forgotten by the people by this time and they were accorded equal status even with the members of the orthodox class, besides the Kṣatriyas with whom they had already entered into matrimonial alliances. That they were no longer barbarians and were thoroughly transformed, developing literary taste, is further noticed in the Ajmer slab inscription [2] which contains portions of *Harakelināṭaka*, composed by Vigraharāja and written by Bhāskara, son of Mahīpati and grandson of Govinda who was born in the royal family of Hūṇa and was a favourite of king Bhoja. Rājaśekhara, too, did not ignore them and has referred to the Hūṇa ladies noted for the lustre of their cheeks. [3] The same feeling is expressed in the *Kāvya-mīmāṁsā* [4] where Yāyāvarīya describes the bud of *madhūka* robbing the Hūṇa beauties of their pointed grace. All this shows that the Hūṇas were by this time not looked down upon as foreigners, and they had definitely gained a prominent status in the society, paving way for their complete absorption in the vast bulk of Hinduism.

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[1] D. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes* (1916), p. 184.

[2] *HMHI*, vol. ii, p. 31.

[3] P. P. Modi, *Presidential Address, Fourth Oriental Congress*, p. 10.

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[1] *IA*, vol. 58, p. 161 : "हूणश्च कृषु राजोन्यः सर्वदेवोपि गोष्ठिकः"

[2] *IA*, xx, p. 210 ff.

[3] *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, vii, 59 : "कुंकुमपङ्कजचर्चितहूणतरुणी…"

[4] Chap. xviii, p. 109 : "हूणीनां कुरुते मधूकमुकुलं लावण्यलुण्टाकताम्"

RELIGION

The early Hūṇas had a primitive religious system which included the worship of heaven and of fire. They held fire sacred which indicates that, like so many other Central Asiatic peoples, the Ephthalites had been exposed to religious stimuli radiating from Iran. This Iranian influence was not strictly Zoroastrian because the Ephthalites buried and did not expose their dead.[1]

Infact their religion in the early period seems to have been Mazdayaśnian, if not purely Zoroastrian, somewhat akin to the latter. In their country there lived many Zoroastrians which is clear from the statement of Firdausi in connection with the victory of Behram over the Haetalites. He says that in the Haetalite centres like Chagan, Khatal, Balakh, Bokhra and Gurzastan (or Gharchakān) there lived Mobads who went to fire-temples and prayed there with Bāz and Barsam.[2] Behram, we are further told, after his victory went to the great fire-temple of Ādargushasp in Āzarābādgān, offered thanks to the Almighty for his success and presented to the temple the jewels of the crown of Khakan which he had taken with him. Describing this episode, Tabāri says, in his war with the Hūṇas Behram had also taken prisoner the wife of Khakan, the great Khatum, to this fire-temple to serve the temple.[3] The sending of a Hūṇa lady to serve in a fire-temple shows that the Hūṇas, atleast some, if not all, were believers in the religion of Mazda. But, at the same time they also seemed to have worshipped demons and deities as we learn from the account of Sung Yun who travelled India in 520 A. D.

The early Hūṇas also worshipped Sun which is testified by Hiuen Tsang who describes the temple of their god, Sun or Kshun in Zabulistan which was highly venerated in neighbouring areas. It was the shrine of *Sūrya.* Toramāṇa and Mihirakula worshipped Brāhmaṇical deities though they also patronised their ancestral gods, while Tarkhan Nizak was a zealous follower of Buddhism and reprimanded and beheaded the Buddhist chief priest of the Navavihāra (Nowbahar) monastery of Balkh, named Barmak, when he embraced Islam. In Afghanistan, the religion of the Buddha mixed with the cult of Mithra and in the art of Bamiyan, the Buddha has been dressed in the garb of Mithra and the representation of eight Buddhas symbolises the eight Magas or Bhojakara, Mihira, Nikṣubhā, Rājñi, Daṇḍanāyaka, Piṅgala, Rājña, Strauṣa and Īśa Garumtat, supposed to be the eight divine forces emanating from the body of the Sun-god.[1] Infact, this is symbolic of the cultural synthesis that marked the domination of the foreign tribes including the Hephthalites in the north-west.

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[1] McGovern, *op. cit.*, p. 409 fn. 19.

[2] Quoted Modi, *op. cit.*, p. 567 fn. 4.

[3] *Tabari par Zotenberg*, vol. ii, p. 121; Munshi Nawal Kishore's Text (1874), p. 301.

Their settlement in India was further responsible for the great transformation in their religious life. Culturally weak, the victors soon succumbed to the overwhelming cultural superiority of the vanquished and gradually forgot all about their earlier faiths and beliefs. The process of Hinduisation that probably started with Toramāṇa was complete by the time of Mihirakula who became a thorough convert to Śaivism—a fact strongly supported by their literary, epigraphic and numismatic records. It seems, Toramāṇa, unlike Mihirakula, was not much influenced by any particular religion and his epigraphic records present a confusing picture of his personal religious convictions and susceptibilities. The Eraṇ stone boar inscription, issued in the very first year of his reign, refers to the *Varāha* incarnation[2] of Viṣṇu who is said to have caused the mountains to tremble with the blows of his hard snout, showing thereby his faith in or deep devotion to Lord Viṣṇu, while the Kurā stone inscription records the construction of a Buddhist monastery by one Roṭa Siddhavṛddhi for the teachers of *Mahiśāsaka* school, under the royal patronage.

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[1] A. and Y. Godard & J. Hackin, in *Memoires de la de'le'gation arche'ologique Francaise' en Afghanistan*, 1928, Pl. xxii ff; Buddhaprakash, *JIH*, 1957, p. 118.

[2] Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, vol. i, p. 396, verse 1,

The inscription further enumerates certain principles of Buddhism. In line 5 it refers to (i) four subjects of confidence or fearlessness (*caturvaiśāradya*) of a Buddha, [1] *viz.*, the consciousness that he has attained omniscience, that he has freed himself from human passion, that he has rightly described the obstacles of religious life and that he has rightly taught the way to obtain salvation; (ii) the four *pratisaṁbhidās* which are the analytical sciences being divisions of the supernatural knowledge of the Arhat regarding the meaning, the text and the origin of the words, as also the discriminatory knowledge of them; (iii) the eighteen *āvenikas* or the independent states said to be the distinguishing mark of a Buddha who is detached from imperfections which attach to the majority of the mankind and (iv) *Buddhapramukha, i.e.,* belonging to the congregation of which Buddha is the head. This inscription, though very significant from Buddhist point of view, does not really present a clear picture of the religion of the Hūṇas in general and that of Toramāṇa in particular. It simply indicates that Buddhism was yet a dominant religious force wielding great influence and that Toramāṇa, unlike his son and successor Mihirakula, was not only tolerant towards it but also patronised it by giving liberal donations. The reference to *Varāha* incarnation of Viṣṇu and the representation of discus and shell of Viṣṇu [2] on the obverse of his silver coins of the Horseman type and that of rude Lakṣmī [3] seated with legend *jaya* on the reverse of his copper coinage definitely point to his strong leanings to the Brāhmaṇic religion and marks his emergence as a convert to Hinduism. In other words, while the father became

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1. *Ibid*, p. 399, line 5.
2. Smith, *JASB*, vol. lxiii, 1895, p. 188.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 197, 199.

a liberal Vaiṣṇavite extending patronage to other religions, the son turned a staunch Śaivite and mercilessly persecuted the Buddhists and the Jainas.

But, notwithstanding his conversion to Hinduism, Toramāṇa, it appears, had not fully parted with the religion of his forefathers and patronised it in some way or other. The wide-spread sun-cult was still prevalent among the Hūṇas which is attested by his numerous silver and copper coins and also the Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula (c. 530 A. D.). Side by side with it also existed the Fire-cult which is represented on the reverse device of some of the silver coins of the Horseman type [1] of Toramāṇa, indicating that this cult was gradually dying out and was no longer popular with the Hūṇas. The worship of sun and fire was probably the direct result of their close contacts with the Sasanians which they continued for sometime even when they settled down in India. The Chinese travellers have also described them as sun-worshippers in their accounts. [2]

A study of the copper coinage of Toramāṇa which is copied from the Gupta copper coinage, makes it clear that the white Hūṇa ruler in the early phase of his career was a sun-worshipper and used Sun's disc as his special emblem or crest. Toramāṇa's preference for solar worship is also evidenced by his building of a temple to the Sun in Multan and by naming his son Mihirakula or Mihiragula [3] meaning the *sun-flower*. Besides, the reverse devices of most of the small copper coins found both in the Punjab and in the country between the Sutlej and Yamunā, bear a *cakra* or sun-wheel (sun-symbol) and their attribution is based on the type of the sun with the abbreviated name of *Tora* in bold letters.[1] The same sun-type is also found on the copper coins of Mihirakula of which a few specimens show the bull struck over the solar emblem. The recent discovery of some of the copper coins of Toramāṇa from the Punjab invariably portray the sun-symbol on the reverse device,[2] which shows his preference for solar worship, in the beginning of his reign-period.

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 188–89 (cf. the usual fire-altar and its attendants or supporters).

[2] S. Beal, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 284–85.

[3] *Chach-Nāmā* (Trans. Cunningham), pp. 226, 228–29. For an account of the sun-temple at Multān and Sassanian coins connected with it see *Archaeological Report*, vol. v, pp. 115–21, Pl. xxxvii and *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1894, p. 268, Pl. x.

Mihirakula, his sun and successor, though himself a devout Śaivite, continued to patronise this cult as is attested by his Gwalior inscription which records the construction of a temple of the sun-god by one Mātṛceṭa, on the mountain, called Gopa. The first two verses are in adoration to the sun-god which shows that Mātṛceṭa probably belonged to the same stock to which Mihirakula belonged and believed in some form of Zoroastrianism. His particular reference to the true religion (*saddharma*) and to the classes of twice-born (*dvijagaṇa*)[3] naturally lead us to infer that his preference was also equally for Brāhmaṇism. And, his inscription does not, in any way, show his strong preference for the solar cult; he simply patronised the cult of his father but himself turned a devout Śaiva as the same inscription refers to him as *Pāśupata.* Moreover, his preference for solar worship is conspicuous by its absence on this silver and copper coins which infact loudly proclaim his Śaivite faith.

A further study of Toramāṇa's silver coins seems to give a faint idea of his leanings towards Śaivism which was later militantly championed by his son, Mihirakula. His hemi-drachms with Fantail peacock reverse[4] of which we have only two specimens so far are the exact copy of the Gupta coins of the same type with the only difference that the king's head is turned to the left instead of the right. A third specimen of this type (the date lost) bears the distinct legend :

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[1] For details and plates see Smith *JASB*, 1894, pp. 198-99.

[2] A. K. Narain, *JNSI*, vol. xi, 1949, pp. 41-43, Pl. ii, 2-8; vol. xxiv, 1962, pp. 41-43, Pl. iv; vol. ix, (Altekar's paper).

[3] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 401, verses 7-9.

[4] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, pp. 192-93.

Vijitāvanir-avanipati-Śrī-Toramāṇa. Three more interesting coins of the same type as the hemidrachms of Toramāṇa and Guptas with date on the obverse apparently in the same era as Toramāṇa's 54 but with Fantail peacock device on the reverse issued by Īśānavarman, Śarvavarman and one Harikānta respectively were described by Smith[1] in detail. Peacock, as we know, is invariably associated with Lord Kārttikeya, son of Lord Śiva, as his mount, in Hindu mythology. This shows that Kārttikeya, indirectly representing Lord Śiva, had attracted the Hūṇa leader because of his unrivalled prowess and military genius, popularly supposed to be the Lord of war, who is symbolised on his coins through peacock, his inseparable partner. Thus, Toramāṇa, with his definite preference for solar cult in the beginning, came to patronise the various branches of Brāhmaṇism in general and Vaiṣṇavism in particular to which his devotion was unmistakable. It was probably with a view to satisfying the religious urge and instincts of the people of his newly acquired far-flung empire that he honoured the various sects like a shrewd statesman and foresighted administrator.

The reign-period of Mihirakula, however, marks a turning phase in the religious life of the Hūṇas. It ushered in a new era—the era of militant Śaivism and ruthless persecution of the Buddhists and the Jainas. The policy of religious toleration adopted by his great father, right in the footsteps of all great monarchs, was now unceremoniously given a kick by the great son who lacked the administrative foresight and genius of the former.

A study of his coins shows that though a devout Śaiva, he also worshipped or patronised the sun-cult, the fire-cult, moon and Lakṣmī. On the reverse of his silver Sassanian bust type,[2] the fire-altar with attendants is represented while the obverse bears a bull or bull-standard infront with trident behind, along with his usual Śaivite legend, *jayatu vṛṣadhvaja.* His copper Horseman type and Standing king type have on the reverse the seated goddess Lakṣmī with cornucopae.[1] On some of the coins found in the neighbourhood of Rawalpindi and Kashmir, examined by Fleet, we have an eight-rayed sun or planet usually with a periphery or circle round it, as a leading symbol of his coins, besides the bull-emblem of Śiva. This is further attested by his Gwalior inscription, noted above. A third leading symbol is the crescent moon which occurs in eight instances in the same set on the reverse, over the back of the bull. And, two coins of the same set have on the obverse a standard, the top of which is either the eight-rayed sun, or a crescent moon or perhaps a *triśūla*, another emblem of the Śaiva faith.[2] Thus, his coins show clearly his religious or sectarian tendencies both foreign and Hindu in the beginning of his career. But of these his Śaivite leanings became most pronounced towards the later phase of his career which find full play on his coins as well as in his inscription.

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[1] *Ibid*, pp. 193–95, Pl. vi, figs. 13–15.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 202.

On the silver and copper coins of Mihirakula the bull-standard or trident or *triśūla* is invariably portrayed on the obverse. The Sassanian bust type (silver) with two varieties have, besides the crescent, the bull or bull-standard, a trident and the legend *jayatu Mihirakula* or *jayatu vṛṣadhvaja* ('may the bull-standard be victorious.')[3] The copper coinage, also of Sassanian bust type, bear the image of a humped bull and the legend *jayatu vṛṣa* ('may the bull be victorious')[4] on the reverse. Thus, his devotion to Śiva is strongly marked by the legends *jayatu vṛṣadhvaja* and *jayatu vṛṣa* as well as the bull-standard or *triśūla*, another emblem of the Śaiva faith.

The numismatic evidence bearing on his Śaivite faith is further strongly supported by inscriptional and literary evidences. The Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula (the only inscription, he is said to have issued in India proper)

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1. *Ibid*, p. 204.
2. Fleet, *IA*, vol. xv (1886), p. 245 ff.
3. For details, see *JASB*, 1894, pp. 202–03.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 203–09, Also see *JNSI*, vol. xxiv, (1962), pp. 42–44, Pl. iv, figs. 5–9.

describes him as a great worshipper of *Paśupati*. The passage : "*tasyo* (*Toramāṇasyo*) *dita-kula-kīrteḥ putro'tulavikramaḥ patiḥ pṛthvyāḥ, Mihirakuletikhyāto* (*a**) *bhaṅgo yaḥ Paśupatima...*" [1] has, however, been differently interpreted by different scholars. Fleet translates the passage thus : "Of him, the fame of whose family has risen high, the son (is) he, of unequal prowess, the lord of the earth, who is renowned under the name of Mihirakula, (and) who, (himself) unbroken, (broke the power of) Paśupati." [2] Thus, Fleet, supported by Keilhorn, believed that Mihirakula broke the power of one Paśupati, which is quite unconvincing in view of the fact that Indian history knows of no such great ruler as Paśupati during this period, who is supposed to be referred to. Bhandarkar, on the other hand, read *bheje* in the lacuna and suggested and interpreted the term *abhaṅga* as meaning "who was unbroken in the matter of worshipping the god Paśupati," *i.e.* Śiva (*abhaṅgaḥ = pūjāvyāpāre vīramaratitaḥ*). D. C. Sircar, however, points out that this reading is impossible in view of the clear traces on the plate. [3] Whatever the readings, the tenor of the description leaves no doubt that it purports to refer to the worship of Paśupati by Mihirakula. This becomes much more clear if we read the Gwalior inscription together with the Mandsor stone-pillar inscription of Yaśodharman (c. 525–35 A. D.). Verse 6 of this inscription reads [4] : "He (*i.e.*, Yaśodharman) to whose two feet respect was paid with complimentary presents of the flowers from the lock of hair on the top of his head, by even that famous king Mihirakula whose head had never previously been into the humility of obeisance to any other save the god Sthāṇu......" [5]

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1. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 401, line 3, verse 4.
2. *CII*, vol. iii, p. 163.
3. Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 401 fn. 3; *EHNI*, p. 198.
4. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 394–95, verse 6 :

"स्थाणोरन्यत्र येन प्रणति-कृपणतां प्रापितं नोत्तमाङ्गं
यस्याश्लिष्टो भुजाभ्यां वहति हिमगिरिर्दुर्ग्ग-शब्दाभिमान (म्)
नीचैस्तेनापि यस्य प्रणति-भुजबल वर्ज्जन-क्लिष्ट-मूर्द्धा
(चू) डा-पुष्पोपहारैर्म्मिहिरकुल-नृपेणार्च्चित (ं) पाद-युग्मं ॥"

5. *Ibid*, p. 395 fn. 1.

In other words, Mihirakula was a great devotee of Sthāṇu (Śiva) before whom only he bowed his head in all humility. This is further supported by the account of Sung-Yun who says that he "loved to worship demons." [1] As demons are usually associated with Lord Śiva in Hindu mythology, there is no doubt that he worshipped them out of his great devotion to that great god of destruction. In his *Rājataraṅgiṇī* Kalhaṇa says that Mihirakula was "comparable to the god of destruction" and further remarks :

"For in ŚrInagarI, the foul-minded man founded the temple of Mihireśvara and in Holadā a big city named Mihirapura.

"The Brāhmaṇas of Gandhāra accepted from him gift of *agrahāras* ; they nodoubt, too, were of similar character as his own and were the meanest Brāhmaṇas." [2]

Kalhaṇa evidently wrote on the basis of traditions current in his time which, however, contain some historical elements. Mihireśvara in this passage refers to god Śiva who is variously known as Rudra, Mahādeva, Paśupati, Sthāṇu, Mihira etc. That he made liberal grants to the Brāhmaṇas and founded a city after him speaks of his unflinching devotion to that God, with whom he himself is compared by Kalhaṇa who denounces him probably because of his atrocities perpetrated on the followers of other sects. The reference to his gift of *agrahāras* marks his special preference for the Brāhmaṇas, evidently followers of the Śaiva sect to which Kalhaṇa seems to have been hostile due to his Vaiṣṇavite leanings.

In his zeal for the propagation of his faith, it seems, he ruthlessly persecuted the followers of other sects, particularly the Buddhists and the Jainas. Sung-Yun says that he did not believe the law of Buddha and was cruel and vindictive practising the most barbarous atrocities. [3] Hieun-Tsang recounts in detail his anti-Buddhistic activities while discussing the cause that led to the ferocious war between Narasiṁhagupta Bālāditya and Mihirakula. We are told that in the beginning "he showed anxiety to understand Buddhism and asked for a teacher from the Buddhist clergy who insulted him by recommending a servant of his own house-hold."[1] This foolish and thoughtless act of the clergy provoked him to such an extent that he forthwith ordered the utter extermination of the Buddhist church throughout his dominions.[2] As a result, some sixteen thousand Buddhist monasteries were completely razed to the ground in the north-western frontier provinces alone and some nine hundred thousand men slain or sold into slavery on the banks of the Indus. Besides these, the destruction of the famous centres of the Buddhists—the Kāśiā monastery, the Takṣaśilā and Nālandā Universities, is also attributed to him while he was proceeding to conquer the stronghold of the Guptas, *i.e.*, Pāṭaliputra. There is no doubt that the accounts of the Buddhist writers are highly embellished, but at the same time it cannot be denied that it was his unsympathetic attitude towards their religions that provoked the Buddhist writers to paint him as a devil and worshipper of demons.

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[1] Beal, *Records*, i, p. lxxiv ff.

[2] i, 306–07.

[3] S. Beal, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. lxxiv ff.

The Jaina authors have also the same gloomy tale to tell. They have condemned him as Kalkīrāja, the tyrant. Guṇabhadra in his *Uttara Purāṇa,* while narrating the story of Mihirakula's persecution of the Jainas, says: "Mihirakula asked his ministers whether there were any people on earth who did not owe allegiance to him: the reply was: none but the Nirgranthas. He, thereupon, issued an edict that the first lump of food offered to the Jaina community of Nirgranthas at noon every day by pious people should be levied as a tax. The Jaina Nirgranthas are allowed by the rules of their religion to take their meal at noon once a day. If any difficulty (*antarāya*) occurs at that hour, they must wait for their meal till noon on the following day. The result of the tyrant Kalkīrāja's edict was that they were exposed to utter starvation. Unable to bear this spectacle a demon appeared and killed him with his thunderbolt. He then went into the hell called Ratnaprabhā, there to live countless ages and to endure misery for a long time."[1] It further says that the son of Kalkīrāja was Ajitañjaya who was wise, religious and a great patron of the religion of Jinendra.[2]

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[1] Watters, i, p. 288; Beal, *op. cit.*, i, p. 169.

[2] For the story, cf. Extract from Guṇabhadra's *Uttara Purāṇa,* chap. 76 in *Bhandarkar Commemoration vol.* 1917, pp. 219–21, verses 399-412; also cf. Nemicandra's *Trilokaśāra*, Palm-leaf MS. 32, verses 840-46 (quoted *Ibid*, pp. 221–22).

We may compare this account with the statement of Hiuen-Tsang who says that Mihirakula died "amid various manifestations of the divine wrath" because of his cruel deeds: "the holy saints said, in pity, for having killed countless victims, and overthrown the law of Buddha, he has fallen into the lowest hell where he shall pass endless ages of revolution."[3] The nature of the above descriptions, coming from two different sources, shows that though the accounts are highly hyperbolic, there is some truth in them as otherwise the Jaina and Buddhist writers would not have turned so critical of his cruel disposition towards their sects. Exaggerations, borne of hatred and prejudices, nodoubt play a dominant part in these records but all available evidences certainly point to his ruthless persecution of the followers of these religions who were once kindly treated and generously patronised by his great father.

The followers of Mihirakula in later times were confined to different pockets scattered all over north-eastern and western India and gradually adopted the customs and manners, the language and culture of the Hindus. By the twelfth century A. D. we find that their absorption in the vast bulk of Hinduism was complete and like the Hindus they also turned followers of different religious sects forgetting their old prejudices and institutions and became inseparable part of the Hindu society at large. The cultural history of these Hūṇas has, therefore, no distinctive traits to merit special mention : they now formed one of the varied elements contributing to the cultural history of this vast land.

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[1] *Uttara-Purāṇa*, chap. 76.

[2] *Ibid*, verses 426 & 447.

[3] *Si-yu-ki*, i, trans. Stan. Julien, p. 190 ff; Smith, *EHI* (3rd edn.), p. 319.

LITERATURE

It has been shown above that the Hūṇas were no longer barbarians and that they had already developed some fine literary taste which ultimately contributed to the enrichment of Sanskrit literature. They had now adopted the Sanskrit language as their medium of literary expression which is evident from their epigraphic records. Though their number is limited, nevertheless the use of the *Kāvya* style in them was in vogue and from this very circumstance it follows that poetry was zealously cultivated in their courts. This conclusion is confirmed by other indications of no doubtful character. The samples of the *kāvya* style contained in these inscriptions agree with the works of the recognised masters of Indian poetic art and the same are related to the rules in the manuals of poetics. If it occurs to any one to conjecture that the Hūṇas had caused an interruption in the literary activity of India, the fact may be brought to their notice that the inscriptions of the age of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula and also of later period contain no mean composition and that their authors glorify the foreign kings as highly as if they had been the natural rulers. [1]

The scope of our inquiry in this case is limited to the following records :

(i) The Eraṇ stone boar inscription of Toramāṇa, *i.e.*, the inscription on Dhanyaviṣṇu's boar-statue at Eraṇ (c. 500-515 A. D.) of king Toramāṇa, composed partly in verse and partly in high prose.

(ii) The Kurā stone inscription of Toramāṇa (c. 500-515 A.D.) composed in high Sanskrit prose but strongly influenced by Prākṛta, found in Kurā, the Salt-Range, the Punjab.

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[1] G. Bühler, *IA*, vol. xlii (1913), p. 247 fn. 92.

(iii) The Gwalior stone inscription of Mihirakula—the wholly metrical panegyric on Mātṛceṭa's temple of Sun in Gwalior, from the year 15 (A. D. 515-35) of the reign of Mihirakula who was a contemporary of Yaśodharman.

(iv) The Ajmer slab inscription dated in vikrama saṁvat 1210 (=A. D. 1153) containing the concluding portion of the fifth act, called *Krauñca-vijaya* of the *Harikelināṭaka* composed by Bhāskara, a scion of the family of Hūṇa princes and a favourite of king Bhoja. [1]

The Eraṇ inscription is a Vaiṣṇava record and its object is to record the building of the temple in which the Boar (*Varāha*) stands, by Dhanyaviṣṇu, the younger brother of the deceased Mātṛviṣṇu who owed allegiance to Budhagupta and in whose time the former in conjunction with Dhanyaviṣṇu set up the column that bears Budhagupta's inscription of the year 165. [2] The language is Sanskrit, partly in verse and partly in high prose. Verse 1 is in *āryyā* and verse 2 *śloka (anuṣṭubh) chandas.* But the metre in verse 2 is faulty in the fifth syllable which is required to be short, which Fleet wrongly takes to be a sentence in prose. Verse 3 is again in *āryyā* and the rest is in chaste prose.

The Kurā inscription is in prose—Sanskrit strongly influenced by Prākṛta. Its object is to record the construction of a Buddhist monastery by one Roṭa Siddhavṛddhi, son of Roṭṭa-Jayavṛddhi, for the teacher of *Mahīśāsaka* school which formed one of the five branches of the Sarvāstivāda or Vaibhāṣika school. It was incised during the reign of king of kings, the great king Toramāṇa Shāhi, Jaūvla to whom and to whose family the donor wishes to make over a share of the merit gained by his pious gift.

The Gwalior stone inscription is on a broken sand stone-slab, found built into the wall in the porch of a temple of the Sun in the fortress at Gwalior. The language is Sanskrit, though slightly influenced by Prākṛta, in verse throughout.

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2. *IA*, xx, p. 201 ff, 132.
3. *CII*, iii, No. 19.

Altogether three metres have been used—*mālinī* (verses 1–2), *āryyā* (verses 3–12) and *śārdūlavikrīḍita* (verse 13).

The Ajmer inscription does not fit in the tradition of the above records and forms a class by itself, deserving a separate treatment.

Of the above records, the Kurā record is not at all significant from *kāvya* point of view. Its language is the mixed dialect, incorrect Sanskrit strongly modified through the influence of the vernacular Prākṛta, which once used to be called the *Gāthā* dialect on account of its occurrence in the metrical portions of the sacred writings of the northern Buddhists. It appears to have been produced by the efforts of half-educated people to write the sacred language of the Brāhmaṇas.[1] The earliest specimens usually show the greatest number of abnormal forms. This also shows that the record is the earliest in the chain and is not worth considering from *kāvya* point of view as compared to other records.

The Eraṇ and Gwalior records are, to a remarkable degree, clear from faults imputable to the artists who executed them. In them some of the well known metres of Sanskrit poetics have been used with perfect success and the prose is also of high order.

If we compare the contents of the compositions in question, it will be seen without doubt that these compositions belong to that class of *praśastis* (encomiums or panegyrics) of which the recent epigraphical researches have brought to light such a large number. Sometimes these compositions resemble a *mahākāvya*, containing, in conformity with the rules of the science of rhetorics, descriptions of cities, oceans and mountains, seasons and so on; sometimes we find the whole of a *kāvya* comparatively short in extent, or a section of a long *kāvya* presenting only one metre; sometimes there is one general metre with a different metre used at the close only; in other cases, again we see a large number of metres used, as in the case of the Gwalior inscription where *mālinī*, *āryyā* and *śārdūlavikrīḍita* have been used. The diction in the two records shows many marks which, according to Daṇḍin, characterise the poets of the Eastern School. The praise of the Sun (Gwalior inscription) and the description of *Varāha*, *i.e*, Viṣṇu (Eraṇ inscription) in the *maṅgala* contain several points of relationship with passages in classical poems which are devoted to the glorification of the same godhood. They comprise briefly the ideas which are met with in the Purāṇas, in the writings of *Sauras* and *Vaiṣṇavas* identifying the gods with the world-spirit as generator and preserver of the universe, and even in still older works. The agreement of thought and imagery is on the same classical pattern and the metaphor of the girdle and breasts [1] is, as usual, not absent in them.

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[1] Bühler, *EI*, i, p. 238.

As regards the prose it is clear that the Eraṇ inscription (prose part) bears a close relationship with the *gadya kāvyas* preserved for us, and that it especially contains many comparisions current in the latter. But, it must be admitted that this *praśasti* occupies a considerably lower rank than the prose parts in Hariṣena's *kāvya* (Allahabad pillar inscription) and is still less artificial than the works of Subandhu, Bāṇa and Daṇḍin.

From what has been said above it is clear that the compositions being partly in prose and partly in poetry in different metres, belong to the variety of *kāvya*, known as *campū* which seems to have been popular since the days of the Guptas and even earlier. The authors, though unfortunately their names are not given, seem to have been well acquainted with the rules of Indian poetics, and masters of both the *Vaidarbhī* (simple) and *Gauḍī* (ornate) styles, the former being used for the metrical and latter for the prose portions of the compositions. The choice of words is judicious and the figures of speech beautiful and they were gifted with the power of giving an effective and graphic pen-picture of any situation.

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[1] Cf. the following verse of the Eraṇ inscription of Toramāṇa (Sircar, *op. cit.* p. 396) : "जयति धरण्युद्धरणे घन-घोणाघात-घूर्णित-महीध्रः
देवो वराहमूर्त्तिस्त्रैलोक्य-महागृह-स्तम्भः"
Also cf. verses 1, 6–8 of the Gwalior inscription (Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 400–01).

Thus, their *praśastis,* in form and essence, strictly belong to the domain of Sanskrit artificial compositions and it can not be gainsaid that in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries the *kāvya* literature was in its full bloom and that the *kāvya* did not at all differ from those handed down to us.

Compared to Hariṣena and other masters of Indian poetic art, the authors of these small compositions do not seem to have been poets of high order. They were content with writing small *praśastis* instead of addressing themselves to a bigger task. But, we should be grateful to them for their neat compositions or *kāvya* which had been fairly popular since second century A. D. and which, instead of being interrupted, was zealously cultivated and patronised by the Hūṇa monarchs in their courts.

The fourth record, engraved about six hundred years after the decline and fall of the Hūṇa empire in India, is commonly known as the Ajmer stone-slab inscription [1] which preserves partly for us, the unknown play, *Harakelīnāṭaka* whose author is said to have been no less a personage than the king Vigraharājadeva himself. Actual and undoubted proof is here afforded to us of the fact that powerful Hindu rulers of the past were eager to compete with Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti for poetical fame. And, it shows "the strange vicissitudes of fortune, that the stones, on which a royal author, who could boast of having repeatedly exterminated the barbarians and conquered all the land between the Vindhya and the Himālaya, made known to his people the products of his Muse, should have been used as common building material for a place of Muhammadan worship, by the conquerors of his descendants."[2]

The characters of the record are Nāgarī of the twelfth century A. D. and they were well and regularly written and carefully engraved by the learned Bhāskara whose father Mahīpati was a son of the learned Govinda who was born in a family of Hūṇa princes, and was on account of his manifold excellences, a favourite of a king Bhoja. This shows that this was a family of the learned Hūṇas who had cultivated and enriched Sanskrit learning and literature through several generations and by virtue of their euridite scholarship had gained name and fame and received and distributed lavish royal patronage.

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[1] *IA*, xx, p. 201 ff.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 201.

The inscription is dated in the year 1210 (vikrama saṁvat) which corresponds to A. D. 1153 in the christian era. The languages employed are Sanskrit and Prākṛta. The inscription contains the concluding portion of the fifth act, called *Krauñca-vijaya* of the *Harakelināṭaka*, and it is clear that in point of style, the poet has here imitated the famous *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi. The inscription has been executed with minute care and perfect accuracy and the Sanskrit of the author is throughout correct and fluent. In the great tradition of Sanskrit *kāvya* almost all the metres, honoured by all the great poets of the past, have been brought to use. The metres of the verses are *śārdūlavikrīḍita*, *vasantatilakā*, *śikhariṇī*, *sragdharā* and *anuṣṭubh*, *āryyā*, *puṣpitāgrā*, *hariṇī* and *mandākrāntā*. None of these verses occurs in either Sāraṅgadhara's *Paddhati*, or Vallabhadeva's *Subhāṣitāvali* and none is probably quoted in any of the works on Alaṁkāra. [1]

Yet another impression of this inscription was later found which furnishes a new portion of the *Harakelināṭaka* which consists of 41 lines of writing, written by Bhāskara, and contains portions of the second and third acts of the play. [2]

Unfortunately we have no specimens of other works written or composed in the time of the Hūṇa monarchs or in the courts of the later Hūṇa chiefs. Their records and coinages throw some light on the script they employed. In the beginning they had a script of their own, popularly known as Hephthalite script which is referred to in the *Lalitavistara* [3] and which is also used in the two Uruzgan inscriptions of Mihirakula[1] found in Central Afghanistan, dated c. 500–515 A. D. The legends on their coins such as *śāhī, śānśāh, kautaī bāgo, buzurga* etc. indicate that their language belonged to the Iranian stock.[2] Even their names Toramāṇa and Mihirakula strongly bear Iranian tinge.[3] The Chinese contention that they had no written character is refuted by the *Lalitavistara* which refers to *Hūṇalipi*. Besides, we have scripts in partly looped and elongated character on the coins of the Khionites-Hephthalites.[4] Stein discovered the fragment of a manuscript in this script in 1916 at Lu-lan which was studied by F. W. Thomas.[5] The two inscriptions from Afghanistan also bear small legends in Hephthalite character, and some of the fragmentary manuscripts in this character are also preserved in Berlin.[6] This is the Greek script of Bactriana of 24 letters with a special letter for *ś* which forms the script of 25 letters prevalent in *T'u-ho-lo* or Tukharistan at the time of Hiuen Tsang and this script was in use from Bactriana and the Western Pamirs up to the frontiers of Seistan. It met the Sogdian beyond the Oxus in the north and in the south the Kharoṣṭhī script was its neighbour. This script was known as *Tökhari* or Tukharian and was known as such in the colophons of üighur works.[7] Besides these, designation of Toramāṇa as *Tsavala* or *Jauvala (Jauvla)* in Kurā inscription and that of Mihirakula in the Uruzgan inscriptions; *Jaubla, Jabula* and *Jabubla* on the Horseman and Sassanian types of Toramāṇa which on the

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 203–04, 204 fn. 5.

[2] For the original extracts, see *Ibid.*, pp. 210–12.

[3] *IA*, 1913, p. 226; Levi, *Bulletin de l'ecole Francaise d'extreme Orient*, vol. iv, 1904, pp. 575–79. In this work, there is a list of 45 scripts in which *Hūṇalipi* figures at No. 23. Also see *JIH*, 1957, p. 117 fn. 78.

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[1] Cf. *JARS*, 1954, p. 112 ff.

[2] Cf. O. G. Von Wesendonk, "Kūśāṇ, Chioniten und Hephthaliten" in *KLIO*, 1933, p. 345.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 345.

[4] H. Junger, *Die Hepthalitische Munzinschriften* (Berlin, 1930); cf. *JAOS*, 1944, pp. 1–3; *JNSI*, xxii, p. 102.

[5] F. W. Thomas, "A Tokhari (?) MS," *JAOS*, 1944, pp. 1–3.

[6] *KLIO*, (*NS.*), 1951, pp. 41–69.

[7] H. W. Bailey, "Ttaugara," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1935, p. 892; P. Pelliot, in *T'oung Pao*, 1936, p. 260 & *JA*, 1934, pp. 34–53; Sylvain Levi, *Fragments de Textes Koutchéens*, pp. 5–7; *JIH*, 1957, pp. 117–18.

Ephthalite coins are mentioned in Persianised form as *Zabol*[1]—are sufficient to prove that the Hūṇas were certainly acquainted with the alphabet and they went on adopting the written characters and legends of the peoples they conquered.[2]

In India proper, however, all their records are engraved in various Gupta characters (Gupta Brāhmī). The Kurā inscription is written in nail-headed variety of Brāhmī of the northern class of the 5th-6th century A. D., the Eraṇ inscription in Brāhmī of the northern class of the 5th–6th century and the Gwalior inscription in Brāhmī of the northern class of the sixth century A. D., whereas the Ajmer stone-slab inscription is engraved in Nāgarī characters of the twelfth century A. D. The legends on the silver and copper coins of different varieties and on the seals found in Nālandā and Kauśāmbī also bear the language and character of the fifth-sixth century A. D. All this shows that the Hūṇa kings and chiefs had already adopted the script and languages of the country where these were current, whereas in parts of north-western frontier provinces they still employed their own script with its marked peculiarities. And, as time went on, they were absorbed in the vast bulk of Indian civilisation adopting all its peculiar characteristics and traits.

COINAGE

As in the field of polity, in the field of coinage too, the Hūṇas introduced no innovation or novelty. Of them it has been rightly said that "they were past master in imitation and their coin-types are the best examples of such innovation"[3] Like many other problems connected with their history, their coins too present a ticklish problem that still baffles scholarly ingenuity. Wherever they went, they borrowed and imitated cultures and institutions and it was this process of continuous borrowing and imitation that they carried the Sassanian style of coinage to India which continued in Gujarat and Rajputana till about 1100 A. D. In India, too, the process continued uninterruptedly with the result that they imitated the coins of their conquered territories as is evident from their numerous coins found at Chiniot and Shāhakoṭa. Even this imitation was crude and vulgar and devoid of aesthetic sense whatever. Thus, the Hūṇas invented no new designs, introduced no new style and made no distinct contribution to the brilliant tradition of numismatic art introduced by the Indo--Greeks, cultivated by the Kuṣāṇas and perfected by the Guptas.

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[1] *NC.*, 1894, pp. 276–78; *Transactions of the Ninth Congress of Orientalists*, 1892, p. 235 ff.

[2] Cf. *Acta Orientalia* (Budapest), i, pp. 141–88 (for the language of the Hūṇas); R. K. Kavi, *Caturbhāṇī* (ed.), p. 15; Agrawal & Motichandra, *Caturbhāṇī* (ed.) pp. 181–82; *JNSI*, xxv (1963), p. 173.

[3] *JNSI*, xxv, p. 172.

The early parts of the fourth and fifth centuries A. D. saw a well organised currency in India. Prior to the advent of the Guptas, the Kuṣāṇas and later, the Kidāra Kuṣāṇas had organised currency resulting in the growth of tremendous trade and commerce in those regions. In about the fourth century A. D., the disturbing Hūṇa raids had begun affecting the peaceful trading routes of Central Asia. These raids practically forced the Kidāra Kuṣāṇas to issue coins in baser gold. The rise of the Hūṇas, their conquest of parts of Central Asia and subsequent invasion of India leading to the occupation of Kashmir worsened the economic condition of the valley of Kashmir. With the overland trade-routes disturbed and ultimately closed down, a land-locked territory, detached from the rest of the world, Kashmir under the Hūṇas became an impoverished country. Gold and base gold coins of the Kuṣāṇas and Kidāra Kuṣāṇas tragically went out of cirulation, there was reversion to agriculture and that consequently led to the establishment of the feudal order in the valley. In the wake of these political and economic convulsions came the copper coinage struck by Toramāṇa in the sixth century A. D. The Toramāṇa type of copper coins continued to be in circulation for a long period and they were used in daily transaction even as late as the time of Muslim rule.[1]

COINS OF THE EARLY HŪṆA CHIEFS

In western India the Hūṇa influence was so great that a Tomara chief is said to have designated himself as a *Jauvala* or *Jāula*[1] after the style of the Hūṇas. One of the two silver coins, attributed to the Hūṇas,[2] bears the legend *Jayatu Yabu (pu) sara,* the reverse device showing traces of altar in the centre with attendants on either side. A. K. Narain suggests that solar standard is not found on any Ephthalite coins[3] but we have shown elsewhere that the coins of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula do bear solar symbol along with other symbols.[4] On these two coins Toramāṇa is also described as *Shāh Jauvala, Javula* or *Javuvla* and *Jabusara,* the latter being a variant of the title of the same name applied to Toramāṇa. All these titles bear definite tinge of Sassanian influence which is clear on some of his earlier types.

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[1] *JNSI* .xviii, p. 71 ff.

The silver and copper coins furnish us with a list of the names of more than a dozen kings of Hūṇa origin, who are said to have ruled over parts of Afghanistan, Kashmir and the Punjab. The identification of most of these names is quite uncertain, and the period of their rule is almost unknown. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* gives some information about the activities of some of these kings in Kashmir, but this is all based on hearsay and legends, and is very often vague and misleading. In other words, neither literature nor archaeology enlightens us on this baffling problem. From the coins, however, we have a few names which stand out clearly—Lae-lih, Rāmānīla or Ramanila (of Zabula), Toramāṇa and Mihirakula. Of these the identification of the former two is yet controversial while the latter two are great historical personalities whose role in Indian history is well known.

Some of the coins with different name-endings have been discovered :from the Punjab of which a few with *Āditya* name-ending were published and edited by James Prinsep.[1] It has been shown elsewhere[2] that it was under the leadership of Lae-lih that the Hūṇas had wrested Gandhāra from the Kuṣāṇas who is now identified with Lakhana Udayāditya of the Punjab coins though doubted by some scholars.[3] The obverses of the two specimens of Udayāditya's coinage are depicted in very clear woodcuts.[4] The legend is perfectly legible and unmistakable, except for the second and third character of the second word.[5] Prinsep read the word as *Lamata*, but Cunningham reads it doubtfully as *Lakhana* which is read as *Latona* or *Lanona* by M. Drouin.[6] Smith suggests that the first character is certainly *la*, and, in the woadcuts the third character seems to be *ta*, not *na* and the medial character is dubious. "It is unfortunate that the second word of the legend, which must be the real personal name, is doubtful."[7] *Udayāditya* appears to be a mere title, similar to *Vikramāditya, Bālāditya*, and other titles of like formation assumed by the Gupta kings. These Udayāditya coins, says Cunningham, were probably struck by Lae-lih, the father of Toramāṇa[8] whose identity we have discussed elsewhere.[9]

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[1] L. V. Pouissin, *Dynasties et histoire de Inde depuis Kaniska Jusquaux invasions Mussalmans*, p. 123.

[2] A. K. Narain, *JNSI*, xi, p. 141 ff.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 141 ff.

[4] *Infra*, chaps. iv–v; also cf., Cunningham, *Later Indo-Scythians*, pp. 252–53, 283;Prinsep, *Indian Antiquities*, i, p. 412; Smith, *CCIM*, i, pp. 232, 235 (Pl. xxxv. 4).

Whitehead suggests that there is either Pahlavi legend or a few Brāhmī legends on the coins of the early Hūṇas as well as some Hindu symbols such as conch etc.[10] It is true, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula did not adopt such titles as Udayāditya, Pūrvāditya or Harendrāditya but that does not necessarily rule out the possibility of the later Hūṇas assuming such titles when they were completely Hinduised.

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[1] *Essays*, i, p. 411.

[2] *Infra*, chap. iv.

[3] *JNSI*, ix, pt., i, p. 15.

[4] *Essays*, i, p. 411, nos. 3–4.

[5] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 190.

[6] *Journal Asiatique*, Mai-Jain, 1890, pp. 546–50.

[7] *JASB*, 1894, p. 190.

[8] *Trans*. p. 228. The coin of Pūrvāditya (woodcut No. 2) and others belong to the same class (*Essays*, i, p. 411; *Num. Chron*. 1894, p. 285 ff).

[9] *Infra*, chap. iv.

[10] *JASB*, 1913, p. 481 ff.

Another controversial personality is Rāmānīla or Ramanila of Zabula who is now known to us from the coins studied by Ghirsman who suggests that this king should be identified with Toramāṇa himself.[1] We have thoroughly discussed this problem posed by sundry numismatic evidence elsewhere and shown that this identification can not be accepted in the present state of our knowledge.[2]

COINS OF TORAMĀṆA

The coins of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula occur in both silver and copper, and are not certainly known in gold, "though it is probable that many of the rude imitations of the Gupta gold Archer coins are of white Hūṇa origin."[3] The main characteristic of the white Hūṇa coinage is its want of originality. They were a rude and barbarous people[4] and were generally content to imitate as well as they could the coins of the various countries which they overran and conquered with the result that the Hūṇa coinage occurs in widely varying forms, Persian, Parthian, Indian and Indo-Roman. A study of their coinage clearly reveals that their silver coins follow Persian and Parthian models; the copper pieces are mainly Indian and gold (if any gold coins are Hūṇa issues) copy of the Gupta coinage which is characterised by Smith as Indo-Roman. Altekar, on examination of some of the Hūṇa coins of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, came to the conclusion that Toramāṇa borrowed Sassanian type in Afghanistan, Gupta type in India and Kuṣāṇa type in Kashmir.

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[1] Ghirsman, *Les Chionites Hapthalites*, p. 35.

[2] *Infra*, chap. iv.

[3] *JASB*, 1894, p. 188.

[4] Cunningham calls them "the illiterate White Huns" (*Trans.* p. 234) but Gibhon, whom he cites, gave them the epithet of "polite" (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Embire*, chap. 42). Their rudeness is, however, vouched for by Sung-Yun.

The coins of Toramāṇa have not been found in large numbers. Cunningham divides his silver coins, whose number is few, into two classes—(i) Broad thin pieces of Sassanian type with king's head, with a club in front of the face and legend in Gupta characters : *Ṣāhī Jabubla* or *Jabula* on the obverse and traces of fire-altar and its attendants on the reverse, and (ii) small hemidrachms, exactly like those of the Fantail Peacock type of Kumāragupta I, Skandagupta, Budhagupta, Bhīmasena and Īśānavarman, with the difference that Toramāṇa's head is turned to the left.

Smith, however, suggests three main classifications of his silver coinage : (i) the Horseman type with horseman to right, discus and shell of Viṣṇu (?) or vase, in field, Ephthalite symbol with marginal legend ; *Ṣāhī Jabula* or *Ṣāhī Janabula* on the obverse and the usual fire-altar and supporters, rudely executed on the reverse ;[1] (ii) the Sassanian Bust type with bust of king to right, with a cap adorned with a crescent infront and marginal legend in Gupta characters : *Ṣāhī Jabūvlaḥ* or *Jabula* on the obverse and indistinct reverse. Cunningham describes four or five coins of this class ;[2] and (iii) the Fantail Peacock hemidrachm type with Fantail peacock reverse which is exactly the copy of the Gupta coins of the same type, the only exception being that the king's head is turned to the left, instead of the right. There are only two known specimens[3] of this type in the British Museum which have been repeatedly described by scholars. A third undated specimen has, however, been described by Hoey which bears the legend : *Vajatāvaranavanapata Śrī Toramāṇa* (i. e., *Vijitāvaniravanipati Śrī Toramāṇa*). Besides this, there are three interesting coins of Īśānavarman, Sarvavarman and Harikānta, in the cabinet of Hoey, which are of the same type as the hemidrachms of Toramāṇa and the Guptas. [1] The two silver coins in the British Museum are dated in the year 52 which is expressed in a special white Hūṇa era, commencing probably from A. D. 456–457. [2]

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[1] Only two specimens are described by Cunningham (*Num. Chron.* 1894, p. 277). Prinsep, however, describes a third specimen which is very similar (*Essays*, i, Pl. xxxiii).

[2] *Num. Chron.* 1894, p. 278, Pl. ix (vii), figs. 10, 13.

[3] Cf. *Arch. Surv. of W. India* (Thomas), vol. ii, p. 36, Pl. vii, 27, 28; *ASI*, vol. ix, p. 26, Pl. v, 18, 19; *IA*, xviii, p. 225 (Fleet); *JRAS*, 1889, p. 136 (Smith); *Trans. of International Congress of Orientalists*, London, 1893, vol. i, pp. 228–29; Cunningham, *CMI*, p. 20, Pl. ii, 11.

Somewhere in Mārwāra a hoard consisting of 175 Indo-Sassanian coins belonging to the Sassanian Bust type of Toramāṇa were discovered and examined by Hoernle. The obverse device of these coins bore the king's bust to right, and the reverse that of a fire-altar with supporters. These are close copy of the issues of king Firuz of Persia (459–486 A. D.) and appear to be contemporary imitations of his coinage, though somewhat cruder in execution. But, unlike the Persian coins, these coins have no legend whatsoever. Obviously, they form two classes—(i) one with the king's head of distinctly Sassanian type, and (ii) the other, much numerous, with the king's head of rude, thick-lipped, barbarian type. Hoernle has rightly assigned all the Indo-Sassanian coins to Toramāṇa. [3]

As we know, in India proper, Toramāṇa imitated the contemporary Gupta silver coinage, and observed a similar practice also in Kashmir. He did the same thing in the course of his conquest of certain portions of the Sasanid empire, and the age of these coins coincides exactly with that of Toramāṇa. It is possible that the advancing armies under Toramāṇa carried all these issues to the place where they have now been discovered. But the most curious aspect of these coins is that they bear no legend whatever whereas Toramāṇa's Indian

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1. For details see Smith, *JASB*, 1894, pp. 193–95.
2. For other views see *Ibid*, pp. 193–95.
3. For his arguments see *PASB*, 1889, p. 229. For figures of typical variety of this hoard see *JASB*, 1890, pt. i, Pl. v.

as well as Kashmirian imitated coins are invariably inscribed with his name. This further shows that his Sasanian imitations were his first attempt at coining money of his own and in that case the barbarian head on the obverse of class II must be a crude portrait of Toramāṇa himself though "to call it a portrait is rather an exaggeration".[1] Smith also ascribes these coins to Toramāṇa and suggests that multitudes of rude coins of this type bearing no legends have been found in northern India, probably struck by the Hūṇa leaders.[2]

Unlike the silver coins, the copper coins of Toramāṇa present many difficulties. Some of the coins bearing the name of Toramāṇa are said to have been issued by a king of Kashmir, of perhaps later date than the White Hūṇa chief.[3] His exact date is not known though he is dated 520 A. D. by Cunningham who takes him to be a contempory of Toramāṇa, the Hūṇa king.[4] This view is, however, erroneous which we have shown elsewhere.[5]

Two of the copper Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir have rude standing figure of the king, with the legend : *Śrī Toramāṇa* on the obverse and the rude figure of Lakṣmī with the legend *Jaya* on the reverse. Certain *Tora* coins, collected by Rodgers, exhibit a much more degraded form of the Standing King device and can'not well be assigned to Toramāṇa, the Hūṇa monarch (500 A. D.) : the standing king is reduced to the barest skeleton of a rude diagram. A very similar coin collected from the Punjab was published by Hoernle.[6] Another in the same style is figured by Cunningham which is vaguely assigned to a class of copper coins showing Śiva and his bull on one side, and a very rude representation of fire-altar with its two attendant priests on the reverse with names in early mediaeval letters.[1]

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[1] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 192.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 192.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 195.

[4] *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 391.

[5] See my article "The second Phase of the Hūṇa Invasion of India" in *JIH*, 1966, pp. 67-92.

[6] *PASB*, 1885, p. 5, Pl. i, 14.

Two pieces of *Tora* coins have a very degraded standing figure on the obverse and sun on the reverse with the legend, *Śrī Tora* or *bara* (?). A third piece portrays the standing king holding bow in left hand, as in Gupta coins with the legend *Torā* or *Tora* on the obverse and sun with the legend *Tora* on the reverse. A fourth piece, however, has the figure of standing king to left, sacrificing at altar with right hand, resting on spear with left arm and legend illegible on the obverse and Lakṣmī seated with legible letters *ram* on the reverse as in Gupta coins.[2]

The Sassanian Bust type of Toramāṇa copper coins have modified Sassanian bust, facing right, of the king wearing a close-fitting skull-cap with an indistinct letter before face, read as *Bu* on the obverse and a sun (wheel) in the upper field with *Tora* in bold characters. In view of this Hoernle's supposition that in the case of certain double-struck pieces, the emblems of Toramāṇa are superimposed on those of his son,[3] seems erroneous as we have shown elsewhere.[4] The Archer type was also issued by him with the same devices as in the Gupta coins.

These small copper coins have been found in the Punjab and the region between the Sutlej and Yamunā. Their attribution to Toramāṇa is based on the type of the sun with the abbreviated form of *Tora* in large letters. A smaller class of copper coins bearing king's head of Sassanian type on the obverse and a *cakra* or sun-wheel on the reverse with the legend *Tora* or with the name of *Zoboa* or *Jabula,* the peculiar

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[1] *Coins of Mediaeval India,* Pl. vi. i. For other specimen, see Cunningham, "Coins of the White Hūṇs" in *Num. Chron.* 1894, p. 280, Pl. ix (vii), fig. 17.

[2] For these pieces, see Smith, *JASB,* 1894, pp. 197–99, Nos. 1–4 & pp. 199–200.

[3] *PASB,* 1885, p. 6.

[4] *Infra,* chaps. iv–v. Also cf. *JASB,* 1894, p. 201.

Ephthalite symbol being absent have been assigned to Toramāṇa, which are his undated Indian coins found in the Eastern Punjab and Rajputana.[1] These coins confirm that the white Hūṇa monarch was a sun-worshipper which we have discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter.

COINS OF MIHIRAKULA

Compared to the silver coinage of Toramāṇa, the silver coins of Mihirakula are exceedingly rare and constitute only one type—The Sassanian Bust type with two varieties. On the obverse of Var A. standard in front of bust is an umbrella, having a bull to left......with the legend *Jayatu Mihirakula* and the reverse shows only the remains of fire-altar and attendants nearly obliterated.[2]

Var. B is smaller than Var. A with only bull infront of bust, sometimes a trident, with the legend *Jayatu vṛṣadhvaja* ('may the bull-standard be victorious') on the obverse, and the reverse being the same.[3]

The copper coins of Mihirakula fall into three distinct classes—(i) Horseman type, (ii) Standing king type, and (iii) Sassanian Bust type. The large copper coins of Type (i) portary the figure of the king on horseback with the legend *Mihirakula* on the obverse and the goddess Lakṣmī on the reverse; the middle-sized coins of Type (ii) are the exact copies of the Kuṣāṇa proto-type. The obverse presents the king standing with a spear in left hand and right hand held downwards over a small altar with the legend *Ṣāhī Mihiragula* or simply *Mihirakula* and the reverse has the goddess Lakṣmī seated, with cornucopiae; and the small copper coins belonging to Type (iii) like the silver coins of Sassanian type have on the obverse the king's head with the legend *Śrī Mihirakula* and a humped bull with the legend *Jayatu vṛṣa* ('may the bull be victorious'). [1]

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[1] Cunningham, *Trans.* p. 229.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 231, 236; *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 27; *Num. Chron.* 1894, Pl. x (viii), fig. 3.

[3] *Trans.* pp. 231, 236; *Num. Chron*, 1894, Pl. viii (x), fig. 4 and p. 281 ff; *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 27.

Thus, we find that there are two distinct legends even on his Indian coins. On some coins he is given the simple title of *Śrī* preceding his name, while others have *Jayatu Mihirakula.* On still others we have the Scythian form of *Ṣāhī Mihiragula.* It seems, therefore, that the coins bearing the former legend were struck in Kashmir while the latter were issued either in Gandhāra or in Taxila. [2] His copper coins of the Western Punjab are all of the Kuṣāṇa type, with the standing King and seated goddess Lakṣmī, but the few silver coins and all the copper pieces from the Eastern Punjab present a Sassanian looking bust of the king, with the bull and trident of Śiva. The legends *Jayatu Vṛṣadhvaja* and *Jayatu Vṛṣa* as well as the bull and trident symbol nodoubt strongly mark his great devotion to Lord Śiva. [3] Moreover, his coins, as we have shown earlier, clearly show both his religious and sectarian tendencies which we also come across on the Gupta type, [4] which bear the wheel, or sun, the crescent moon and the trident.

In recent times some new Ephthalite coins have been published by A. S. Altekar [5] and A. K. Narain [6] found mainly in the Punjab area. Notable among these are (i) a restruck coin of Toramāṇa (No. 4) and (ii) Toramāṇa coins overstruck by Mihirakula (No. 5).[7] But there is nothing specific in these coins as most of the varieties are well known and they offer no new designs or types or varieties. They exhibit

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[1] For the different specimens see *Coins of Mediaeval India,* p. 27; *Num. Chron.,* 1894, p. 282, Pl. viii (x), figs. 7, 5, 2, 1; *PASB,* 1885, No. 1, pp. 4–5, figs. 1–4; *JASB,* 1894, pp. 204–06.

[2] Cunningham, *Coins of Mediaeval India,* p. 27.

[3] *Trans.* p. 237.

[4] For details, see Fleet, *IA,* xv, p. 249.

[5] *JNSI,* ix, pt. i ; xi, pp. 56–58.

[6] *JNSI,* xi, pp. 41–42; xxiv, pp. 41–44 (with plates).

[7] *JNSI,* xxiv, p. 41 ff.

Sassanian bust with the usual legends in Brāhmī. Further, Disalkar also recently examined some Gadhia copper coins on the basis of which he has shown that the entire Hūṇa coinage was nothing more than a rude imitation of the Sassanian and local Indian coinages.[1]

THE LATER HŪṆA COINAGE

Even after the exit of Mihirakula, his successors continued to rule over Kashmir and also some parts of India for some time. The coins of these Hūṇa chiefs have come to light but their number is too meagre to present even a partial picture of their numismatic activities. For us it is difficult to attempt at present to treat of the issues of these local chieftains about whose activities we practically know nothing from any conceivable source. This is possible only for a numismatist who is fortunate enough to have access to well-stocked cabinets presenting different varieties and types, to fill in the omissions and complete the gap. Some such obscure cognate issues have been described and figured by Cunningham, Smith and others but they hardly enlighten us on either political or chronological order of the period.

Cunningham describes four or five coins of the Sassanian Bust type (silver) of Toramāṇa.[2] Similar coins are known of *Deva Ṣāhī Khiñgila* and of *Rājā La (khana) Udayāditya.*[3] He possessed only one coin of Khiñgila whom he dates in A. D. 580 and had four specimens of Udayāditya coins whereas Theobald had only one.[4]

Deva Ṣāhī Khiñgila has been identified with Khiñkhila who is mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* as one of the kings who succeeded Mihirakula and was known by the Hindu title of *Narendrāditya.* We have copper coins of the period with the legend *Jayatu Śrī Narendra* and these may have been the issues of the same chief. Cunningham also describes two rude

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1. *Ibid*, xiii, p. 66 ff.
2. *Num. Chron.* 1894, p. 278, Pl. ix (vii), figs. 10, 13.
3. *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 26.
4. *Ibid*, p. 26; Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 189, fn. 2.

gold coins of a king of Kashmir bearing the legend *Śrī Narendra* whom he identifies with *Narendrāditya* of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. These coins are of the ordinary debased Kidārite type, with *Kidāra* under the king's arm.[1] Numismatic considerations suggest that Śrī Narendra was distinct from Khiṅgila Narendrāditya[2] who is also sought to be identified with Lakhana Harendrāditya of Kalhaṇa. It has been noted above that a coin of Lakhana Udayāditya was noticed in the Punjab described by A. S. Altekar.[3] Kalhaṇa also mentions a Hūṇa king of that name but his *viruda* was *Narendrāditya* and not *Udayāditya.* Cunningham identified Lakhana Narendrāditya with Udayāditya[4] who struck silver coins of [the Hūṇa type. Stein has given a detailed description of the various types of the alleged Kashmirian Hūṇa coins.[5] But, it is impossible to determine as to which of the coins came earlier and which ones later.

Other variations of the Standing king obverse of the same type of Toramāṇa, with a solar reverse bearing the legend *Śrī Tora,* read as *Śuta* by Cunningham, seem to be issues of later Hūṇa chiefs, whose identity will always remain a problem. Many such varieties without legends but with the different Hūṇa symbols have been described by Cunningham, V. A. Smith and others which were struck either by contemporaneous or later Hūṇa chiefs of whom we just know nothing.

Smith found some small anonymous Indo-Sassanian coins which were found at Bhitarī between Ghazipur and Banaras. Some such coins were also obtained by Cunningham at the same place, which he assigned to the eighth or ninth century.[6] Smith is inclined to treat them as earlier issues. Similar coins were found at Indor Khera in Bulandashahr district, associated

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1. *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 43, pl. iii, fig. 5.
2. *JASB*, 1894, p. 189 fn. 3.
3. *JNSI*, ix, Pt. i, p. 15.
4. *Later Indo-Scythians*, pp. 97, 111.
5. *RT*, iii, p. 383 fn.
6. *Arch. Rep.*, vol. i, p. 97.

with the ruins of the Gupta period.[1] A rude reminiscence of the Sassanian reverse device is found as late as 900 A. D. on the coins of Vigrahapāla (I) of Magadha.[2]

THE SO-CALLED TORAMĀṆA COINS OF KASHMIR

The attribution of the Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir is yet another knotty problem which has not been solved satisfactorily and a great deal of controversy centres round its proper attribution among scholars. Three alternatives have so far been suggested : (i) The Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir were issued by the Hūṇa king Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula; (ii) or by Toramāṇa, the father of Pravarasena II mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* who was a different personality altogether, or (iii) by a third Toramāṇa of whom we practically know nothing.

The description of these copper coins may briefly be given as follows :

They weigh approximately from 100 to 120 grains and are very similar to the Kidāra Kuṣāṇa coins with the Standing king and the legend *Śrī Toramāṇa* in Brāhmī of the fifth-sixth century A. D., on the obverse, and a goddess, a crude imitation of the Kuṣāṇa Ardochso, holding a lotus and a vertical legend *Kidāra* on the reverse.

The identity of this Toramāṇa was first of all discussed by R. L. Mitra and Bhāu Dāji who suggested that these coins were struck by the Hūṇa king Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula. Cunningham counteracted this view and suggested on numismatic as well as literary considerations that this Toramāṇa, also mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, was a local ruler, altogether different from the Hūṇa monarch of the same name. His arguments rest on the following plausible grounds :

(i) According to *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Toramāṇa of Kashmir was never a king. He died in prison : on the other hand, the power and greatness of the Hūṇa monarch is well known, whose influence was felt from the Indus valley to Magadha, Banaras and Kauśāmbī.

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[1] *Ibid*, vol. xii, pp. 44, 48.

[2] *Ibid*, vol. xi, pp. 175, 181, Pl. xliii; *Coins of Mediaeval India*, pp. 49-52.

(ii) Toramāṇa's (of Kashmir) son was Pravarasena II, according to Kalhaṇa, and was a great conqueror who is said to have re-established Śilāditya on the throne of Mālwā who was formerly an expelled son of the monarch of that kingdom, whereas Hūṇa Toramāṇa's son Mihirakula was defeated by Yaśodharman, king of Mālwā. Besides this, the coins of Pravarasena II, both in gold and silver, bear the name *Kidāra* in beautifully formed letters as on Kidāra coins which we do not come across on the coins of Toramāṇa, the Hūṇa king. The Hūṇa Toramāṇa has his hair cut short, while the Kashmir Toramāṇa has bushy hair like his ancestor Kidāra as copied from the Sasanian kings, and the characters of the Kashmir coins are of a later date than the others. All this shows that the former probably belonged to the Kidārite Kuṣāṇas and as such the two (Pravarasena and Mihirakula) can in no case be identical. In such an eventuality the two Toramāṇas may be treated as two distinctly different persons.[1]

In support of his argument Cunningham further adds : in Kashmir "the earliest are the well known copper pieces of Toramāṇa and the gold and silver coins of his son Pravarasena...... The coins are so superior in execution to all the contemporary coins of north-west India that I look upon them as the first real issue of the Kashmir mint...... I much doubt whether there was any previous coinage in Kashmir."[2] Thus, Cunningham on the authority of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* as well as numismatic evidences, regards the Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir as the unauthorised issues of a pretender, and not of the Hūṇa king.

The above suggestion has been both refuted and supported by many scholars such as V. A. Smith, Fleet, Hoernle, Stein, A. S. Altekar, S. C. Roy and others. It must, however, be admitted that some of the proposed tests of Cunningham are

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1. *Trans.* p. 132; *Later Indo-Scythians*, pp. 88-90.
2. *Num. Chron.*, 1893, pp. 190-93; *Coins of Mediaeval India*, p. 27.

open to criticism and it is extremely difficult to accept the existence of two contemporary Toramāṇas in northern India in A. D. 520. [1]

It is true, as Cunningham, and following him S. C. Roy, [2] has pointed out that the word *Kidāra* occurs on the Toramāṇa coins of Kashmir which is absent on the coins of Mihirakula, although the word again appears on the coins of Pravarasena who is said to have lived in the last quarter of sixth century and also on the coins of Karkoṭas. This, in our opinion, is no serious objection to the attribution of these coins to the Hūṇa king Toramāṇa, as in the realm of Indian numismatics such things are not uncommon. We have several instances of the later kings imitating the earlier style and type of their predecessors in the history of the Kuṣāṇa and Gupta numismatics. The appearance of the seated goddess can also be explained in the same way of which we have many specimens in the highly developed Gupta coinage itself. Thus, the question of style should not be the only consideration for determining the attribution of a particular series to a particular king, especially when we have to consider a series of coinage which is nothing but crude, sometimes vulgar, imitation of the previous issues current in different localities as in the case of the Hūṇas who neither properly imitated their prototypes nor contributed anything of their own to the existing series. Therefore, it seems fallacious to argue that there was no previous coinage in Kashmir. The Kidāra coins were already there which were later imitated in crude forms by their successors and the existence of the gold and silver coins of Pravarasena himself bear witness to the earlier series—a fact which is also attested by Kalhaṇa. [3]

Kalhaṇa's whole account of the Hūṇas rests on hearsay which is solely responsible for all this confusion. The Hūṇas were already ruling in the Punjab in c. 600 A. D. and they dominated Gandhāra a century earlier as shown by Sung Yun.

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[1] Smith, *JASB*, 1894, p. 196.

[2] *JNSI*, xiii, p. 152 ff.

[3] *RT*, (Stein's trans.), vol. i, p. 81.

Thus, there is nothing inherently impossible in their having conquered Kashmir under Toramāṇa which later Mihirakula inherited, as the Chinese accounts tend to suggest. It is unbelievable to think that the conqueror of the Punjab, Sind, Gandhāra and other parts of north-western provinces should have left Kashmir untouched and safe in the hands of the local rulers. Keeping in view his wide conquests, this possibility is certainly ruled out, no matter Kalhaṇa refers to it or omits it altogether. Moreover, Kalhaṇa's Pravarasena whom he mentions as a great conqueror, credited with the restoration of the throne of Mālwā to Śilāditya, is not known to Indian history which is simply surprising. Evidently Kalhaṇa has confused him with some other conqueror of Indian history.

The most astounding aspect of his narration is the inherent contradiction and inconsistency in his accounts. Kalhaṇa says that this Toramāṇa was never a king, was a mere pretender and died in prison where he was put by his brother for striking the copious copper coinage which we now possess. It passes beyond one's comprehension how could a pretender issue unauthorised copper coinage in such a large number, by suppressing the existing legal tender and put them in circulation for the general use? We have hardly any parallel elsewhere. And, it is all the more surprising to find that the brother who put his another ambitious brother behind the bar and allowed him to die in isolation, issued only "some coins" and almost left untouched the illegal currency to be used by the people, instead of wholly suppressing and replacing it by the legal tender of his own to assert his lost authority. All this seems too mysterious and unbelievable to deserve credence.

Against this background we have to consider the somewhat contradictory statement of Kalhaṇa that "this Toramāṇa put into circulation *some coins* struck in his own name after suppressing the *undue abundance* of coins struck by Bālāhaṭa (?)" ![1] Stein points out that it is difficult that Kalhaṇa could have meant in this passage any other coins but the Toramāṇa coins found in large numbers in Kashmir. He further suggests that numismatic considerations based on the type and the execution of coins and the character thereof favour their attribution to Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula, or otherwise they offer two alternatives :

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[1] *RT*, iii, v. 103; Stein's *Trans.* i, p. 81.

(i) The Toramāṇa of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* is identical with the king of the White Hūṇas, or

(ii) He is altogether a different and later ruler.

In the former case Kalhaṇa would be guilty of having placed the father much earlier than the son whereas in the latter case his error would lie only in the attribution of the coins. As Kalhaṇa's history does not fit in with the general trend of events that occurred in the history of northern India during the period to which he refers, his account, in our opinion should not be given as much credence and reliance as due to an authentic work. He has obviously confused the issue and mixed up later events with those of the early periods, causing a veritable mess of things, historical and legendary. As we have suggested earlier, there are no grounds to believe the existence of two Toramāṇas during this period.

The possibility of a third Toramāṇa having struck all these issues does not at all appear to be likely. Except Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula, and the so-called Toramāṇa of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, we know of no other Toramāṇa who is known to have ruled over Kashmir during this period. Kalhaṇa no doubt mentions a third Toramāṇa later on in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* [1] but he belonged to the Shahi kingdom and flourished in the tenth century A. D., and can by no stretch of imagination be associated with these coins.

The observation of Smith that "coins of a Toramāṇa have been described which undoubtedly must be attributed to the White Hūṇa chief, the son of Mihirakula", [2] is erroneous as history is aware only of a Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula, not the son of the latter, although Hoernle, followed by Altekar, seems to believe that Toramāṇa, a son of Mihirakula, is not unknown to numismatists. Among the Hūṇa coins from the Punjab are some coins of Mihirakula, counterstruck by the legend *Toramāṇa* which, according to Hoernle, suggest, that Mihirakula had probably a son named after his own father, Toramāṇa.[1] This view, however, can not be accepted : at best it may only indicate that some person called Toramāṇa was either perhaps a contemporary or a successor of Mihirakula as numismatic convention suggests that generally a conqueror would restrike or over-strike the coins of his defeated rival rather than a son, his father's. The restriking of Nahapāṇa's coins by Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī is an instance to the point. Indeed, the double-struck coins published by Hoernle, on re-examination, appear to show that in every case the name and emblems of Mihirakula lie over those of Toramāṅa.[2] This was further supported by Rivett-Carnac and Cunningham who suggested that the bull was struck "above some former design" or "over the solar emblem."[3] Numismatically this seems quite probable and convincing. As to Bühler's contention regarding two Toramāṇas we have elsewhere pointed out the errors and fallacies inherent in his arguments.[4]

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[1] *RT*, i, v. 233; *JNSI*, xiii, p. 176; Cunningham, *Coins of Mediaeval India*, Pl. iii, nos. 1–2; *IMC*. i, Pl. xxvii, nos. 2–9.

[2] *CCIM*, i, p. 265 (Sec. xiii).

Thus, the coinage bearing the name of Toramāṇa seem to have been mechanical copies of the earlier issues struck by the Hūṇa king which continued for several centuries after his death. Coins of Toramāṇa published by Smith[5] are later than those of the same monarch, published by Cunningham,[6] by a century or so. On examination of some coins of Toramāṇa Altekar found *Jaya* on the reverse which is not found on seven of the early coins of Toramāṇa. He, therefore,

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1. *PASB*, 1885, pp. 4-7.
2. For details see Fleet, *IA*, xv (1886), p. 245.
3. *JASB*, 1894, p. 202 fn. i.
4. *Infra*, chap. iii.
5. *IMC*, Pl. xxvii, nos. 2-3.
6. *Coins of Mediaeval India*, Pl. iii, nos. 1-2.

suggested that these were issued by the rulers of the Karkoṭa dynasty of Kashmir in the seventh century A. D., and not by the Hūṇa Toramāṇa. In other words, the Toramāṇa types were issued in copper by Karkoṭas. [1] The important point to remember here is that almost all the Toramāṇa coins bear legends in Brāhmī characters of the fifth-sixth centuries and they do not in all cases contain the word *Kidāra* [2] or *Ki* as suggested by some scholars. [3] This leaves little doubt about these coins having been originally struck by Toramāṇa, the Hūṇa monarch, which, though itself a series of rude imitations, were more crudely copied and imitated by the later rulers. Śrīvara, the Kashmir chronicler, points out that the name of Toramāṇa continued to be minted down to the time of Husan Shah (1472–1485 A. D.). [4] Besides these, a large number of copper coins bearing the *Toramāṇa* legend were current till the end of the Hindu rule in Kashmir and the date of its initial circulation may be traced back to the sixth century A. D. [5] A large number of copper coins of Toramāṇa were also discovered along with the coins of the Muslim Sultans of Kashmir at Avantipura. [6]

CONCLUSION

From what we have discussed above we infer certain irresistible conclusions. The coins, discovered so far, do not show any specific type or Hūṇa origin, nor are they properly copied or imitated, Right from the beginning to the end they constitute a series of crude, often vulgar, imitation of their already debased proto-type which sadly reflect on the genius of the Hūṇa race and strongly emphasise their violent barbaric character. But, the later imitations of the Toramāṇa types of Kashmir by rulers of different dynasties of the area for a pretty long time, are all the more abominable and point to the desperate and shameful outlook of royalty to imitate whatever they could get at without the least efforts to prove or to modify or to effect any change in the previous rotten series. It further speaks of the terrible stagnation in national genius leading to the unceremonious burial of the brilliant tradition of numismatic art introduced by the great Guptas, and of other achievements in the various walks of national life. With the decline in power, it seems, all the fine traits of national character also disappeared, giving way to uncertainty, insecurity and, above all, vulgarity all around.

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[1] A. S. Altekar, *JNSI*, vols. ix & x.

[2] Cf. *CCIM*, Pl. xxvii, nos. 2–3.

[3] S. C. Roy, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 33 ff; *JNSI*, xiv, p. 152; xii, p. 152 ff.

[4] Stein, *RT*, ii, p. 315. For the Hūṇa coins in the British Museum, see *JNSI*, xxiii, p. 456 ff.

[5] *JNSI*, xxv, p. 175.

[6] *ARASI*, 1913–14. For Kashmir coins bearing *Śrī Pratāpa* legend found in Monghyr, Patna, parts of U. P. and M. P., see *JNSI*, x, pp. 30–32.

To return to the Hūṇa coinage. The whole series, as has been pointed above, betray influence of the Sassanians, the Kidāra Kuṣāṇas, the Western Kṣatrapas, the Guptas and the Maukharīs. The metal used was silver and copper. Gold was not unknown, as we find in the case of Pravarasena of Kashmir, but it was a vain effort to pursue coinage in gold which was gradually sinking due to miserable economic condition of the country resulting in the alround domination of the copper and silver for which the depradations of the Hūṇas were not less responsible. Bull, trident or *triśūla,* sun, moon, fire, Lakṣmī and peacock were used as symbols, but no era on the pattern of the Śakas, or the Guptas or the Vardhanas was ever started by the conquering Hūṇas as a legacy for the posterity to remember. The small coins, though in large numbers, are of course the only main testimony of the rise and fall of the successors of the great Attila on the Indian scene, with nothing else to record or account for. Ignored by history they were, however, gratefully remembered by the subsequent Indian dynasties of the small chiefs and rulers through their imitations of the Hūṇa coinage, the specimens of which are yet found in Rajputana and elsewhere. The brave Rajputs of the early-mediaeval period also did not lag behind in paying homage to their barbarous but great conquering predecessors by copying their degenerate base pieces which preserve the thin flat fabric with still more debased head and the fire-altar on the obverse and reverse respectively. The Gaḍhiya coins, for instance, circulated down to a later period, show traces of Sassanian origin and may certainly be ascribed to the Hūṇas who came on the scene of history as brute conquerors, and lived in the domain of culture as rude imitators. The question of any originality is, therefore, ruled out, the talk of any craftsmanship is simply ridiculous and any effort to find even the slightest trace of genius any where would be monstrous. They just left the scene as did the other foreign elements before, unsung and unhonoured, and like them were subsequently lost in the vast crowd, but unlike them they bequeathed no legacy, no tradition worth the name, to the posterity to follow or to remember.

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